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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Bound Infinities: Scheherazade's Moral Matrix of *The 1001 Nights*

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Michael James Lundell

Committee in charge:

Professor Alain J.-J. Cohen, Chair
Professor Steven Cassedy
Professor Lisa R. Lampert-Weissig
Professor Michael Provence
Professor Oumelbanine Zhiri

2012

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2012

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my father James H. Lundell

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Bound Infinities: Scheherazade's Moral Matrix of *The 1001 Nights*

by

Michael James Lundell

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California, San Diego, 2012

Professor Alain J.-J. Cohen, Chair

“Bound Infinities: Scheherazade’s Moral Matrix of *The 1001 Nights*” is the first study that positions the multiple variants of the *Nights* as separate texts, and ones that should be treated in literary studies as such. This is an important notion because the *Nights* has long been seen as one insufficiently defined work of literature. By researching each variant on its own merits much more literary and cultural history is revealed, and new, richer understandings of postcolonial, translation and semiotic studies are highlighted.

This dissertation looks through the lens of the *Nights* via an examination of the oldest “G-manuscript” of the *Nights* and its sexualized contents, paratextual amendments of the European *Nights* of the 19th century by Edward Lane and Richard Burton, fantastical elements of the *Nights* of the 18th century Galland version and its English translation known as “Grub Street”, film versions of the *Nights* of the 20th century, and Orientalist and postcolonial theory. I argue, in part, that Orientalism has been so often misapplied to the *Nights* that it has wrongly embedded it into a discourse that obscures its identity. I end with an examination of a modernist “version” of the *Nights*: James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

My overall intent is to clarify what the *Nights* is, detach it from misapplied Orientalist discourse, and to demand an elucidation in future *Nights* studies that specific versions and their idiosyncratic identities are addressed as a primary focus of any study involving the *Nights*. The study intersects with semiotics, cognitive linguistics, film studies, translation studies, psychoanalysis and postcolonial theory but its main goal is to resituate the *Nights* into a truly transnational context unfettered by a culturally embedded identity.

Introduction

This dissertation is an exploration of some major versions of the text known commonly as *The 1001 Nights*, also as *The Arabian Nights*, but also by many variants, hereafter referred to simply as the *Nights*. The study consists of several possible answers to many of the questions I had when beginning to study *The 1001 Nights*. First, what was this work, exactly? Many speak about it but few do so without being general. Secondly, how do the parts of the *Nights* reflect its sense of identity, and where do they detract? For this question I've examined several film versions of the *Nights*, as well as many of its well-known textual variants, within a variety of theoretical engagements, and have here, come up with some interesting and suggestive conclusions. This study is, in a large general sense, a biography of a literary work that has, for centuries, resisted specific definition and has been a central point of contention for politically and culturally related literary theory, and is in many ways an investigation of these layers of theory that have, at times, seemed to obscure the text itself. The cornerstone of this dissertation is an examination of the so-called "G-manuscript," a surprisingly understudied version of the *Nights* dated to the 14th or 15th century AD - published in an edited form by Muhsin Mahdi in 1984, which is largely accepted as the oldest version of the *Nights* containing any stories. By extracting the G-manuscript from its other variants, a very clear thread becomes evident in its contents: it is, primarily, given the theme of all of its stories, a

humorous book of tales highlighting humanity's inability to cope with its sexuality. It has, however, been obscured and reconfigured in such a way as to limit a clear understanding of its contents. The process of obscuring the G-manuscript's *Nights* began with its first European translator, Antoine Galland, who began publishing his version titled *Les Mille et Une Nuit*, in 1704. Galland, like most all handlers of the *Nights* after him, wrote his own idiosyncratic version of the *Nights* – his was a sexually censored collection of stories which highlighted their fantastical elements and included many stories not found in the G-manuscript, some later volumes bearing Galland's name were not even written or translated by him. The sheer size of his *Nights*, which contained 12 volumes, forever enveloped the comparatively slim three volumes of the G-manuscript into a new identity, cloaking and yet preserving its core on some level. This *Nights* of the 18th century became, at the hands of mainly English translators, a distinctly Orientalist text in the 19th Century – a text purportedly containing anthropological, religious and cultural “truths” about Islam and the Arab World. Arabic versions of the *Nights* printed in the 19th Century also situated the story collection away from its G-manuscript incarnation, adding a distinctly authentic air to this reconfigured collection, even though, according to Mahdi, most of these Arabic versions were either printed by or for European sources. Since the 19th Century the identity of the *Nights* has been embedded primarily into this Orientalist discourse, both by its initial translators and still by contemporary cultural critics. It is the problematic insistence on an Orientalist framework, and on an identity based on later versions of the *Nights*, that has both obscured the *Nights* of the G-manuscript, but also highlights the shortcomings of approaching literature in a distinctly political fashion that my study as a whole intends to showcase.

This dissertation's theoretical engagements include semiotics, genre and adaptation studies, translation studies, cognitive linguistics and psychoanalytic literary theory. The major theoretical framework of the dissertation as a whole, however, is within the postcolonially defined discourse of Orientalism and its relationship with the *Nights*. This relationship has, in many important ways, shaped the perception of what the *Nights* as an artwork is, often, unfortunately, in some methodology's misapplications, in insular and limiting ways. Scholars and translators have, for the most part, approached the post-19th century *Nights* with caution, with an aim at distancing themselves from any cultural misrepresentation, which seems to have included caution regarding the sexual aspects of the *Nights*. I also suspect that contemporary engagements with the *Nights* that rely on solely cultural elements to identify the text limit themselves to such degrees that it further obscures what exactly this text is. At the same time this study does not propose a complete dismissal of the Orientalist aspects of the *Nights*, or a simplistic dismissal of the findings of Edward Said but instead argues for a call to clarify the truly complex postcolonial modes of approaching literature or art that have, in the case of the *Nights*, been haphazardly applied.

“Bound Infinites: Scheherazade's Moral Matrix of *The 1001 Nights*” is a unique addition to the large body of scholarship on the *Nights* in many ways. First, it posits an identity of the *Nights* that is based on the G-manuscript, one that other versions of the *Nights* might, on some level, measure themselves by. This dissertation also highlights the benefits of certain literary approaches and the dangers of approaching literature in other ways, and by beginning it with my study of the narrative art of the G-manuscript I think I suggestively declare the benefits of the obvious – read the text first, and clarify which

text, including – especially – which version of the *Nights*, you are writing about or researching.

It may seem surprising that few scholars have studied the G-manuscript on its own merits, however it wasn't until 1984 that Muhsin Mahdi published an edited version of it and wasn't until 1990 that a non-Arabic translation, the English one of Husain Haddawy, was published. In addition it seems that Galland was one of the few translators of the *Nights* who actually used the G-manuscript at any length, most later versions were based on other sources. Add to this an incredible amount of individual variants of the *Nights*, in Arabic, English, German, and French to name but a few, most including stories not found in the G-manuscript, and the idea of what the *Nights* seems to be is rightfully obscured behind a thick layer of additions. Non-Arabic speaking scholars working on the *Nights*, many outlined in this dissertation, drew their conclusions from one of these many translations rather than working from the G-manuscript, and other Arabic speaking scholars worked with one of the many 19th century Arabic manuscripts that Mahdi has suggested were primarily creations of European interest, or based on previous European editions of the *Nights* rather than reproductions of an Arabic urtext. Richard F. Burton's *Nights*, in which the author desperately seems to insist on collecting every story ever associated with the *Nights*, and some never found in any *Nights* before, and inserting it into his version, is a great example of just how liberal people are willing to accept what exactly constitutes this unique story collection. The enduring quality of "Ali Baba" and "Aladdin" have made history forget that they were never part of the Arabic *Nights*, and the most recent (2008) English translation by Malcolm and Ursula Lyons¹ is proof: Malcolm translated the Arabic *Nights* of the manuscript known as

Calcutta II and Ursula translated “Ali Baba” and “Aladdin” from Galland’s French, both Calcutta II and Galland, however, contain a much different collection of stories from the G-manuscript. My study here seeks to clarify the G-manuscript, not as an “original,” sole version of the *Nights*, but rather just to examine the narrative art of the oldest known version of the *Nights*. By doing so, I think a more clear vision of what the *Nights* may have once been becomes suggestively revealed.

My study seeks to clarify a small part of the puzzle of the *Nights*, and to propose a methodology for future studies of the *Nights*, based on the work of Muhsin Mahdi, that insist on first clarifying which version is being studied. As such I’ve inserted myself into a small but growing field in *Nights* research, one that builds upon the wealth of past scholarship and yet one that has revealed just how much work is to be done. Some contemporary work on clarifying the *Nights* is taking shape, however. Elise Franssen has completed a PhD on a codicological study of the ZER set of manuscripts at the Université de Liège in Belgium, titled “Les manuscrits de la recension égyptienne des Mille et une Nuits. Étude codicologique, avec édition critique, traduction et analyse linguistique et littéraire du conte de Jānšāh”² (“The Egyptian recension of the Thousand and One Nights. Codicological study, with a critical edition, a translation and a linguistic and literary analysis of Jānšāh tale”), which has revealed some new idiosyncratic characteristics about this set of ZER manuscripts and its potential author that a general approach to the *Nights* would never have uncovered. Research by Aboubakr Chraïbi³ on specific stories such as “Ali Baba,” first found in Galland, and their possible origins have also been revelatory in many significant ways. Robert Irwin’s 2011 *Visions of the Jinn*,⁴ a book on the illustrators of the *Nights* sheds light on a significant element of the *Nights* and their

incredible variety of visual representations. Work by Kamran Rasteger⁵ and Aida Yared⁶ on specific versions of the *Nights* and their interrelationships with other literature and with defining the *Nights* have also been useful and illuminating. Much remains to be done, however, and it is a wealth of research possibilities that awaits any *Nights* scholar. Questions in particular of the various 19th century Arabic manuscripts, particularly the origins and authors, and what, if anything they based themselves on, remain understudied. The lost Persian text that the *Nights* is assumed to have been based on also deserves further research, as do the myriad stories that were inserted into the *Nights* over time which have become integral parts of the story collection. Individual film versions of the *Nights* and their relationship, if any, to a textual *Nights* is something this dissertation initiates in Chapter Three but a field still seriously understudied, not to mention the many other artistic renditions of the *Nights* such as the visual arts, television, theater, and the wealth of children's versions of the *Nights* and their own set of circumstances. Studies remain to be undertaken on how Orientalist depictions of the *Nights* and associated cultural elements have been, in turn, reimagined in the world in interesting and multifarious ways. And, by examining which particular version of the *Nights* is at work intertextually with other art forms and literary works, a unique and clarified example of historical importance seems to reveal itself, something I attempt to do in Chapters Two and Five in particular.

In his 2005 work *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, a politically nuanced contemporary biography/study of Richard F. Burton, Dane Kennedy writes that “The contentiousness that characterized Burton’s efforts to understand difference, especially as it related to religion, race, and sexuality, also reminds

us that there was far less consensus among Victorians that we tend to suppose.”⁷ He writes that a study of Burton reveals a more complex world of relative notions of associations of identity that are more revelatory historically than merely concentrating on one colonial binary identity as some indication of power structures at work in a postcolonial reading of someone like Burton. Kennedy insists that scholars need “to move beyond the mere acknowledgement of these associations and contemplate the uses they served”⁸ in understanding a more complex historical time period. It is in this nuanced postcolonial realm, one that I see as applicable to literary studies as well, that I wish to situate the bulk of my thesis and engage with contemporary postcolonial theory. Lisa Lowe critiques this binary political association well in her 1991 text *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, arguing that “Such a totalizing logic represses the heterologic possibilities that texts are not simple reproductions of context – indeed, that context is plural, unfixed, unrepresentable – and that Orientalism may well be an apparatus through which a variety of concerns with difference is figured.”⁹ In her book Lowe also outlines how literary texts could be approached in a more nuanced, yet still postcolonial, framework. The entire field of postcolonial studies, one still growing and popular in academia, yet one that is still, given the number of panels on the subject (at least twenty specifically related to postcolonial topics and problems with its applications, and many more papers on other panels elsewhere) at the recent 2012 MLA conference in Seattle, fighting for a clear identity, still insists that their work is revelatory in complex and non-essentialist ways. A panel I attended - “African Studies/Postcolonial Studies: A Match (Un)Made in Academia” - highlighted the inherent issues in the seeming inability of African Studies to extract itself from a postcolonial framework,

resulting in an anxious and clearly visible boundary between “African Studies” and anything not dealing directly with colonialism or Africa’s relationship with the West. These complexities and non-essentialist demands espoused by postcolonial theorists, however, still have yet to reveal themselves in significant ways, and in fact a lot of work remains to be done with what the late 20th century and early 21st century application of more binary approaches to literature, ones outlined in this dissertation, have done to contemporary understandings of literature itself. My focus on Edward Said in Chapter Four is deliberate, because it is with Said that the anxieties of approaching a text like the *Nights* truly began in earnest and its application to the *Nights* as a literary text itself began in *Orientalism* as well. It is this specific engagement and approach of Said’s that I want to critique and not to work with the meaning of the discourse of postcolonial theory itself.

Said’s text essentially began and is most associated with postcolonial theory and engages at great length with many of the translators of the *Nights* including Galland, Burton and Lane. As such, I think his book and scholarship after Said has seemed to enmesh the *Nights* wholly into this political conversation, and associate the work itself with some measure of anxiety by those who would study or retranslate it. It is, therefore, vital to deal with Said’s arguments about what a text like the *Nights* is doing, in order to see where and how these points of engagement intersect or illuminate the mechanisms of power that Said suggests are at work. By doing so I don’t mean to dismiss Said’s contentions, but merely to show that indeed they are themselves nuanced, and his own call for an even more complex reading of texts politically in *Culture and Imperialism* has largely gone ignored, particularly with texts and writers associated with the *Nights*. Scholars and critics of the late 20th century and early 21st century have approached these

versions of the *Nights* not in a critically nuanced manner but rather in a dismissively binary way, something Said actually spends a great deal of *Orientalism* cautioning against. What it has led to is a definitive overzealous application of political theory onto literary texts like the *Nights* and the study of them that has actually caused a palpable shift in the way new translations of the *Nights* have approached their works. These new works insist on a rendering that distances themselves from the 19th century Orientalist versions of the *Nights* to such an extent that the identity of the *Nights* itself is obscured behind the kind of political debate that almost ignores the text's existence itself. Efforts to "reclaim" the *Nights* from the Orientalists have also been fraught with this culturally amended, politically charged atmosphere, which has really prevented a clear understanding of what indeed the *Nights* is and was.

It is within this contemporary nuanced understanding of postcolonial theory that much of this dissertation situates itself. Chapter One is largely an outline of the problems that have plagued a work as vast as the *Nights* – questions of identity, forgery, misinterpretation, historical inaccuracies, and the largely generalized notion of the text that have all conspired in admittedly legitimate-seeming ways to seem to obscure what this text is. My approach is to look closely at what past scholars have said about the issue of identity, which *Nights* are being studied, and what they base their claims on, in order to reveal that much remains to be clarified. By extracting the G-manuscript from this confusing conversation, and by examining its narrative art alone, I have come to the conclusion that the *Nights* of the G-manuscript is a series of stories about sexuality, a sexuality portrayed as being directly at odds with sociopolitical structures, resulting in darkly humorous situations. Every story of the G-manuscript, including its important and

enduring frame tale, contains these elements. These story elements then necessarily situate the storyteller, Scheherazade herself, away from what she has largely been characterized as a heroic, well-educated, well-intentioned young woman who tricks this tyrannical misogynistic ruler by leaving off the endings of adventure stories. She is, in fact, someone who tells this ruler, angry over the infidelity of his past wife and indeed of all women, many stories that seem to suggest that indeed everyone in the world is engaged with infidelity, because the strict order that civilization exists under is inherently flawed in its understanding of sexuality. This reading of a text from the 14th or 15th century AD - with roots much earlier, perhaps the 10th century at least in its Arabic version and even earlier in its Persian incarnation - is revelatory in many ways, and showcases an idea, based in humor, that is an outline of a highly ingenious structure and meaning – Scheherazade’s “morality” – that is quite a bit more complex than traditional readings limit it to being. I believe that much of these findings are necessarily situated inside and out of a complex postcolonial context, a political approach to this text that insists on its 15th century identity and its 10th century potential roots, its Persian origins, its Islamic context, or any culturally charged framework that would make approaching what the text is actually saying problematic. Once these isolated narrative findings are examined, resituating it within a possible revelatory historical context then becomes possible, and as I’ve done in Chapter One, it becomes even more evident that the *Nights* is a part of a very real set of historically based texts about sexuality and does reveal something, historically, about the complexity of sexual understandings from this time period. The relationship between sexuality and society – any society – and its depiction in art form is illuminated here however, and brings to mind the many important

contributions to this field by my chair Alain J.-J. Cohen, and also of course Jacques Lacan, Herbert Marcuse, and many others. The *Nights*, for example, has been handled generally as if it were a book to be positioned distinctly away from Burton's over-sexualized (in many different and more problematic ways than the G-manuscript) *Nights*, due to its many post-G-manuscript variants and postcolonial framework, and yet sexuality seems to have been an important, if not the important, component of the text in its oldest incarnation.

Chapter Two is also distinctly situated within the need to reexamine the *Nights* and its problematic Orientalized identity. In it I posit that the *Nights* of the 18th century, while having definite roots in European Orientalism and its challenging power structures, in fact was largely seen as having little to do with any sort of cultural representation and more about fairy tales and fantasy. The *Nights* of the 19th century are also outlined, and compared generally, in this chapter and the use of concept of the paratext seems appropriately revelatory here. It is via paratextual amendments to the text of the *Nights* that the translators of the 19th century resituated the *Nights* into a distinctly colonial and Orientalized framework that seemed to forever change what the *Nights* was. This obscuration even led to later scholars insisting that the 18th century *Nights* and its intertextual relationships were also evidence of Orientalism, when it seems rather that they were operating within very distinct modes of engagement. By separating strands of their identities, it becomes very clear that one can no longer consider the *Nights* only to be a book or story collection with an uneasy relationship to its problematic cultural portrayals.

Chapter Three engages with film versions of the *Nights*, and problems with defining how adaptations of a text with such a convoluted history as the *Nights* has, might be possible. I argue, in part, that Scheherazade's morality might still be slightly seen, even in only loosely associated variants, and showcase how my findings in Chapter One, findings based on a 14th/15th century text of uncertain origin, can still be detected and measured in interesting ways. By focusing only on sexuality in most of his films, I argue, Pier Paolo Pasolini in fact seems to have - inadvertently or not - presented the G-manuscript on film in a clear and surprising manner. I also employ a system based on cognitive linguistics in an article by John Eisele in which he presents a possible genre of films based on the *Nights*.

Chapter Four deals with many of the postcolonially based theoretical aspects I write about above, attempting to see clearly where and how Burton and his *Nights* have been reframed in this binary fashion, where and how contemporary literature has changed because of it and where and how the accusations against Burton do not warrant the dismissive rewriting of history that has occurred. In addition, I insert myself into the current identity formation of the field of Translation Studies, showing how Burton fulfills many of the very detailed elements of what Translation Studies attempts to clearly define as the characteristics of its practice, particularly the practice of 19th century European translators. By doing so, I think it becomes clear that Burton's nuanced contribution to literature, anthropology, travel, sexuality and cultural awareness is more complex than most critics would have it. And yet translators and scholars of the *Nights* find themselves using Burton as a means of disengaging with his own idiosyncratic time period, situating themselves therefore in a framework of contention that seems to disregard the text of the

Nights itself. I find this to be problematic in many ways, but most obviously to the creation of literature itself. If such a well-known piece of literature is so carefully and anxiously approached for fear of repeating the mistakes of the past then that new literature is itself caught in a clearly limited power struggle and confines its own identity, and potentially the identity of all literature, to this engagement with the past that never leaves its very clear and restrictive boundaries. By limiting the *Nights* to a cultural struggle for authenticity one clearly does damage to the text itself – a work of art that is neither authentic nor culturally pure much at all.

Chapter Five ends this study with central engagements of all of the problems I have outlined regarding the *Nights*. I have chosen Joyce's *Ulysses* to highlight the findings of this dissertation because of many important factors. Joyce is included because of more important things than the quality and complexity of his work or his interactions with Orientalism. *Ulysses* is perhaps the exemplary figure of Western literature in its intertextual literary representations and engagements, its form and every piece of its puzzle on many levels resists, accepts and reconfigures the past, but it is not just a historical past but primarily a literary past – the past of Homer, Shakespeare, Chaucer, the author(s) of the *Nights*, among only the most evident literary intertextual figures used in *Ulysses*. In its intertextuality, however, *Ulysses* proposes something interesting: while it is its own text, it is also these other texts, it is just as much a version of the *Nights* as Burton's English translation of the 19th century is. Joyce and Joyce Studies also sheds significant light on the problematic understandings of the *Nights* by Joyce scholars, and of the problematic understandings of Joyce by *Nights*-scholars, and this engagement is important to look at because it illuminates a serious problem in

literary studies that my dissertation and its focus on postcolonial misapplications showcases – the disassociation of scholarship from the texts that it is purportedly writing about. In this Chapter I look at Joyce’s uses of the pantomime versions of the *Nights* in *Ulysses*, and on many levels highlight the usefulness of a less essentialistic approach to postcolonial theory as relates to literature. By isolating the exact version(s) of the *Nights* Joyce uses, and by clearly identifying Joyce’s manipulation of elements from those pantomimes and even his engagement with the form of the pantomime itself, so much more, I believe, is revealed within Joyce’s political machinery and its engagement with Orientalism than would a study simply based on Joyce’s general use of Orientalist motifs. By illustrating a nuanced and yet postcolonially situated approach to literary studies, one based on specifically defined elements, I believe this chapter clearly illustrates the benefits of this more flexible approach to understanding the political nature of literature. Scheherazade’s morality is still apparent here in Joyce, in its Orientalized and complicated sexualities and undermining humor of the pantomime. As such I think this Chapter synthesizes the major themes of the dissertation as a whole, within an author and scholarship about him that highlights and celebrates intertextuality and postcolonially based political engagement throughout.

My methodology consisted of taking a close look at which versions of the *Nights* were being written about by *Nights* scholars and others, and really trying to discern what if anything would come from clarifying this point. Studies at the immense holdings of the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California, were also particularly revelatory, especially regarding a close examination of Richard Burton’s personal library and his marginal commentary found throughout his collection. Additional popular culture

research in Damascus, Syria in 2008, and online through the interactions over the years with related biographers, authors, professors and students were particularly informative and makes the call for an expansion of digital humanities and its possibilities that much more meaningful. I found a lot of success in using terminology from semiotics in clarifying exactly what controlling systems were at work in many of the texts, scholarship and manuscripts I studied. Indeed postcolonial theory itself is based upon a system of semiotics, one that, if carried to its logical conclusion, would necessarily see even language itself to be a power structure of inextricable struggle. Ferdinand de Saussure convincingly suggests of the uneasy relationship between a word and its referent. “The bond between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary.”¹⁰ Quite simply a clearly political message suggesting that all meaning, all representation, Orientalist discourse especially, is charged with attempting to put some disassociated meaning for some reason where it does not necessarily belong. Add to this discordance between words and meanings a political element, one which reexamines the meaning symbolically, and a clear binary relationship is established along Foucauldian lines, ones Edward Said bases his thesis loosely upon. The term *Nights* which can mean *The 1001 Nights*, or *The Arabian Nights*, or whichever particular version of the *Nights* is being referenced, has become not even the text itself but rather some signifier meaning either “fantasy tales from unknown regions and time periods far away” (as in its 18th century incarnation), “tales which illuminate the true customs and practices of the entire Muslim and Arab world” (19th century versions), or “tales which have a Middle Eastern genesis but which were sullied by 19th century Orientalists” (contemporary versions). Each one of these definitions has its own politically charged agendas and each one seems to ignore the text

itself. By doing so, this displacement of the conversation of the *Nights* into something else has clearly moved the study of a literary text into some other realm. This recalls Jakobson, who wrote “Unfortunately the terminological confusion of ‘literary studies’ with ‘criticism’ tempts the student of literature to replace the description of the intrinsic values of a literary work by a subjective, censorious verdict.”¹¹ The history of the *Nights* could well be a cautionary tale against the approaches of “subjective” and “censorious” natures in literary studies, the displacement of a text so far removed from itself, from its very stories, and into a debate based on verdicts of cultural or political reclamation seems in many ways ludicrous because of the text’s clearly secondary nature to the conversation, and yet that is exactly what the *Nights* has become. By insisting that the *Nights* are of a place called the “Orient” one insists on a place called the Orient, and as such the conversation is immediately and inextricably binary – something *Orientalism* claims to eschew. By disengaging the *Nights* from issues of identity imposed upon it by either problematic colonial European authors or by cultural critics wanting to restore and reclaim the *Nights* – both are engaged in a clear process of othering that does little except to ensure that the boundaries between what constitutes “world” literature are indeed very clear – I hope to illuminate what this text seems to really be. My dissertation aims to clarify what is meant by the term “*Nights*” as a textual object, show how it can be disengaged from an Orientalist framework, show that it can be visible even within cursorily related variants such as its many film versions, outline how the politicalization of literary theory has shifted the conversation about the text away from the text, and finally to offer a potential use for the newly defined set of characteristics that constitute a clearer way to approach the *Nights* and perhaps to approach literary studies itself. What

is most exciting about the *Nights*, about Scheherazade and her messages of morality, is precisely the text itself, but also that these messages have, for thousands of years, escaped erasure, even, or perhaps especially, at the hands of her most censorious translators and politicalized scholars.

¹ *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1001 Nights*, Translated by Malcolm C. Lyons, with Ursula Lyons, (London: Penguin, 2008).

² Franssen, "Les manuscrits de la recension égyptienne des Mille et une Nuits. Étude codicologique, avec édition critique, traduction et analyse linguistique et littéraire du conte de Jānšāh," Docteur en Langues et Littératures orientales," PhD diss., Université de Liège, 2012.

³ Chraïbi, "Galland's "Ali Baba" and Other Arabic Versions," *Marvels & Tales* 18.2 (2004).

⁴ Irwin, *Visions of the Jinn: Illustrators of the Arabian Nights (Studies in the Arcadian Library)*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵ Rastegar, *Literary Modernity Between the Middle East and Europe: Textual transactions in nineteenth-century Arabic, English, and Persian literatures*, (London: Routledge, 2007).

⁶ Yared, "Joyce's Sources: Sir Richard F. Burton's *Terminal Essay* in *Finnegans Wake*," *Joyce Studies Annual 2000*, ed. Thomas F. Staley, (Austin: U of Texas P, 2000).

⁷ Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 272.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 272-3.

⁹ Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 8.

¹⁰ Ferdinand de Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics," *The Structuralists: From Marx to Levi-Strauss*, , Ed. By Richard and Fernande Degeorge, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 72.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 87.

Scheherazade the *Jariya*: Revisiting the Frame Story of *The 1001 Nights*

“It has not even been clear throughout the long career of the work since Galland what those who have been translating, commenting on, or studying the work were talking about when referring to the *Nights*: it seemed to range all the way from a single motif in a single passage in a single story to an enormous body of popular stories in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish.”¹² – Muhsin Mahdi, introduction to *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources*.

Muhsin Mahdi is correct. *The 1001 Nights* is a text that is perhaps one of the most widely known and yet most misunderstood pieces of literature in the world, to the point where the title “*The 1001 Nights*” can seem to mean anything. The obscurity of the *Nights*’ origins and the numerous disparities that exist between its many versions and translations make it an elusive text on a grand - geographically and temporally diverse - scale. How then should, or even could, one approach this piece of literature, or write about such a work, and avoid operating in a very vague and general framework? Is there a particular identity associated with the story collection that makes each version a part of a larger identity? Or is each variant of the *Nights* its own unique work, with as tenuous or general a relationship with an “original” *Nights* as *Hamlet* is to the loose term “literature”?

The problematic textual history of the *Nights* has been well researched and written about by a number of people, notably, and recently, by Muhsin Mahdi, Paul Nurse, and Dwight Reynolds.¹³ There is a consensus that there are few definitive answers to the many manifestations of the *Nights*. The oldest “version” of the *Nights* is a slip of paper, dated to the 10th century AD, with an outline of some of the frame story, discovered and written about in 1949 by Nabia Abbott.¹⁴ Besides this fragment, the few mentions of the *Nights* in passing in the 10th century by Ibn al-Nadim¹⁵ and also al-Masudi,¹⁶ and a couple of other documented mentions of the work in the 12th century, there is no discovered, or written about, *Nights* until the 15th century, the general time period to which the so-called “Galland manuscript” (“G-manuscript”) is ascribed. This manuscript is the oldest known version of the *Nights* with any stories in it, and was sent to Antoine Galland in France from Syria in 1701, and formed the basis of his very popular French version of the *Nights - Les Mille et Une Nuit* - that started appearing in 1704. An English-language pirated version, by an unknown translator, titled *Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, which is also known as the “Grub Street” version - due to its genesis in that London street’s publishing district - was shortly printed and circulated in England and beyond, beginning sometime around 1706. Later, Arabic manuscripts and printed editions were published and written in Egypt and India in the 19th century, and many of these have no discovered predecessors. There have been scores of new versions and translations, many with little relationship to one another besides some notion of a frame story featuring the character of Scheherazade, published, translated and printed in about every language, and during each century since Galland. In addition, the *Nights* has been a main component of just about every art form: opera, music, poetry, painting, theater,

television, film, animation, gaming, and comic books, in both high and low forms - all have featured the *Nights* on some significant level over the past five centuries.

Given its inherently phantom nature, and worldwide reach, it is almost impossible to define what the *1001 Nights* is, or at one time was, without doing so very generally. It is understood by scholars to be a collection of old stories that, as Mahdi, Reynolds, Nurse and others have somewhat successfully argued, *seem* to contain, in the G-manuscript at least, Arabic stories of Syrian, Egyptian and Iraqi origin. There are also possible elements of Greek, Indian and Persian stories as well. At some point in history a Persian book with the title *Hazar Afsaneh* (“One Thousand Stories”) seems to have been translated into Arabic, and seems to be a source text for the Arabic *Nights*, yet no copy or piece of the Persian manuscript has ever been found. These scant and largely speculative elements are what constitute what has been accepted in academic circles as certainties regarding the *Nights*. It should come then, as no surprise, that people attempting to define what the *Nights* is should immediately discover an incredibly elusive text.

There is another element, however, that might be included in a general characterization of the *Nights* and it is an important element found in its unique frame story, and most of the stories in the G-manuscript. It seems to be, given the textual evidence of the G-manuscript, a possible answer to why Shahriyar’s attention is held, who Scheherazade is or might be, and why her stories contain so many sexually and morally ambiguous main themes. The frame story contains the general embedded “story-within-a-story” elements that have most often been mentioned in definitions of the *Nights*, but it also has an extremely individual characteristic in the figure of Scheherazade and in its sexually related, humorously undermining, content. There has been, however, a

significant lack in *Nights* scholarship regarding a sufficient definition of the reasons behind the frame story, which has eluded efforts in defining the work more concretely, as a whole. This lack of understanding seems to be related to an overall lack of examination of the tone, content and language of the G-manuscript in scholarship.

The frame story, and the *Nights* in general, is essentially a prolonged joke, and a humorous extended collection of equally comical stories. Yet, despite its inherent comedy, the response historically has largely been to disregard or even censor the intentional humor at work in the frame story, in translations and in scholarship, creating instead a very serious, and potentially “real” situation involving an incredibly grim king with a violent and overactive temper whose anger is assuaged by the extraordinary strength and wisdom of Scheherazade. What these misunderstood or reconfigured transpositions have done is to skew the definition of the *Nights*, and to widely disseminate a confusion regarding the very real joke of the frame story. The general, and faulty, consensus is that what happens to Shah Zaman, who finds his wife sleeping with a household staff member, and what happens to his brother Shahriyar, in the garden with Shahriyar’s original wife, his household slaves, and her lover Mas’ud, is ludicrously “bad,” because the sanctity of marriage was violated, because the fidelity of the rulers’ wives was broken, and because it made the husbands’ power over their wives fragile and weak. It is because of this consensus, however, that a clear reading of the *Nights* of the G-manuscript is impossible. A proper reading of this event, according to the morality of Scheherazade, is that the “transgression” really was a humorous, celebratory and satirical representation of a type of sexual freedom, taking place away from the socially ordered restrictions of the king’s bedroom or castle. This sexuality is at odds with sociopolitical

cultural forces that would rather enforce a stricter controlled sense of sexuality in order to maintain a falsely constructed social structure. The process of acceptance, however, by Shahriyar, through the nightly tales of morality that Scheherazade tells him - that the nature of the world is a sexual one that does not seem to conform to gendered, political or social constructions - is the key component of understanding the *Nights*, particularly the *Nights* of the G-manuscript but compellingly, perhaps, other variants, that has long been missing from discussions of the work.

Many scholars have, to be sure, mentioned the sexuality of the *Nights* in writing about the story collection, none, however, have posited it to be the main defining feature of the *Nights* as a whole. This seems to be due, in part, to a reliance by scholars on later versions of the *Nights* that contain more of a diverse mix of less sexually humorous stories. None have focused their attention solely on the G-manuscript. Robert Irwin writes, “sexual themes...are pervasive in the *Nights*. Indeed, a series of sexual incidents furnishes the pretext for their narration,”¹⁷ but continues, in his book, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, to insist that the *Nights* is a collection of just about any kind of story. Sandra Naddaff writes “There is a strong association between the textual/narrative activity and sexual activity which lies at the heart of the 1001 Nights, and which in some sense actually engenders the work,”¹⁸ but just in order to mention to how the framing devices are a part of the genesis of the multiple storytelling effect, rather than suggesting that this is a part of a larger idea at work in the content of the stories themselves. Daniel Beaumont remarks on the comic aspect of the sexuality of the frame tale, writing that “The narrative veers off into betrayal, orgy, and murder, the stuff of tragedy, and yet the narrative tone is often comic,”¹⁹ and yet spends most of his book psychoanalyzing the

frame tale as a serious drama. *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia* entry “Sexuality” writes about how “a number of stories document an explicit lack of sexual taboos. The collection as a whole has a rather libertine atmosphere,” and that “sexuality in most cases is presented as a joyful constituent of life,” and mentions the fact that “many stories depict sexuality as a domain controlled by women,”²⁰ and yet the book never clearly defines the *Nights* by these very pervasive and overarching characteristics. It seems clear that while sexuality and humor are the main components of the *Nights*, they should somehow be a major part of the story collection’s identity, and yet they rarely are seen as such. Again, however, the *Nights* in all of its variants has misled efforts to clearly see its origins, something a study of the G-manuscript only, might aid in clarifying, and something future studies based only on particular variants of the *Nights* should take into account.

The stories that Scheherazade tells in the G-manuscript are not meant to soothe, tantalize, or otherwise intrigue her new husband but rather, they seem to have at their core, some message of instruction, in a humorous and satirical manner, about a “truer” nature of sexuality, by exposing the ludicrous insistence of people on some external and false construction of order on top of a more natural life. By telling her husband these instructive stories in the way she does, Scheherazade repositions him to revisit the original trauma of his wife’s infidelity with a new understanding of sexuality, which eventually seems to “cure” him, or at least has Shahriyar keep her around for her unique vision of the world. This inherent theme manifests itself in the tales in the story collection itself, in most every part of the G-manuscript as a featured, not even a secondary, narrative focus. As new versions, translations and new stories of the *Nights*

were added since the G-manuscript, however, the pronouncement of Scheherazade's message was dulled, reconfigured or even completely censored to some extent in many cases and stories. And yet this inherent feature of the G-manuscript might be one way of approaching finding some connection between the multiple *Nights* variants.

The curious absence of a primarily sexual identity from scholarship on the *Nights* seems to stem from a lack of any serious study of the narrative art of the G-manuscript only. Most *Nights* scholarship relies on later versions of the *Nights*, or a generalized notion of a "*Nights*," and while these versions are certainly an integral part of the history of this story collection, they are also renditions that color the *Nights* in a distinctly different light than an examination of only the G-manuscript would insist on. Even Husain Haddawy's 1990 English translation of the G-manuscript, *The Arabian Nights*, seemed to do little to change the general perception of the *Nights* as a storehouse for any sort of old Middle Eastern folktale, despite its insistence on being the only version of the *Nights* in English based on the oldest manuscript of the story collection. In fact, while Haddawy insisted that his translation was, finally, an authentic one, "like a restored icon,"²¹ his version also suffers from issues that mask the point of the G-manuscript. Haddawy seems to do this deliberately, he outlines his methodology of translation as one of a careful mediator, using "colloquialisms and slang terms sparingly," and "literary ornament judiciously because what appealed to Arabic thirteenth- or fourteenth-century literary taste does not always appeal to the taste of the modern English reader," and even cuts "the rhymed prose of the original because it is too artificial and too jarring to the English ear."²² Haddawy attempts, and succeeds in part, to sterilize the *Nights*, declaring, "Neutrality is crucial here."²³ The stilted, unadorned quality of his prose, without the

short, fun rhyming puns of the original Arabic, equates to a more serious rendition, despite much of the contents of his narrative. In addition, after declaring his loyalty to a representation of a faithful original only, Haddawy later publishes English translations of “Sinbad,” “Aladdin,” and “Ali Baba,” stories not in the G-manuscript, as *The Arabian Nights II: Sinbad and Other Popular Stories*, in 1995. This secondary publication further buries the general perception of the *Nights* and the G-manuscript underneath later renditions, obscuring the *Nights* as a catchall for both romantic stories and all sorts of tales like the adventure and children’s stories found in Galland and later versions. While Muhsin Mahdi did a great deal of work on the G-manuscript, editing and publishing it in printed form, for the first time, as *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources* (1984), he spends most of his additional commentary and research on its textual history and “urtext” identity, also critiquing later versions, particularly Galland’s *Nuit*, instead of revealing much of the narrative art of the G-manuscript at all. Mahdi seems to have been, in fact, swayed by the post-G-manuscript *Nights*, and the generalized understanding of the collection as a compendium of any kind of story. He writes that the author, or “scribe” - since Mahdi is (likely rightfully) convinced the G-manuscript contains stories from previous sources - of the G-manuscript wanted to “bring together a vast number of stories,” “to incorporate many stories in a single work...without paying attention to their provenance, provided they were of Arab origin,”²⁴ despite the apparent and obvious thread in the stories themselves.

In an intractable relationship with its sexuality, one of the main features of the G-manuscript *Nights* is its satirical quality. This humor is developed and expressed not only in its puns and rhymes in the G-manuscript, written in *saj’*, but also in several of the main

situations of its stories. Again, along with its sexuality, translations of the *Nights* have often stripped the stories of their inherent wordplay, rhyme and development of the humor of their situations. In turning the stories, especially those of the frame tale, into serious dramas meant for serious consideration and examination, these revisions further convoluted a clear definition of what the *Nights* is.

This insistence on the frame tale's sexuality and humor is important because it successfully further defines the *Nights* beyond the more generalized understandings of how Scheherazade was "arousing the cruel ruler's curiosity by the telling of stories" wherein she employs "the narrative device of the 'cliff-hanger,' breaking her stories at critical points in the narrative, to be continued during the next storytelling session,"²⁵ to a more specific definition that provides a good deal of evidence for a clear reason for Scheherazade's methodology. Although the details of the frame story have often been obscured or changed in the diversity of its versions, the following set of situations seems common, and is the situation found in the G-manuscript: Shahriyar and Shah Zaman are rulers, and brothers, in different regions of the Persian Sassanid Empire. They haven't seen each other for many years, so Shah Zaman leaves to see his brother, but forgets something at his castle. He returns to find his wife with another man, and kills them both. Shah Zaman continues on to visit his brother, but he is very depressed, and won't tell his brother why. Shahriyar goes hunting one day, leaving Shah Zaman alone. Shah Zaman sits at a window overlooking his brother's garden, and sees his brother's wife and a number of household staff members enter the garden. The robed staff members take off their clothes and are completely nude, half are revealed to be men and half are women. Shahriyar's wife calls out to a nearby tree, and a man from outside the city walls jumps

down and starts having sex with her, and everyone else in the garden starts having sex. Shah Zaman watches them all day, and then his depression is lifted, he is happy because his brother is in worse shape than he is. Shah Zaman tells Shahriyar this information. Shahriyar, wanting to see for himself, pretends to go hunting again, and the brothers witness the event once more and then leave the kingdom, vowing to never return until they meet someone who is even worse off than they are. The first person/being they meet is an all-powerful giant genie, who emerges from the sea carrying a box on his head. The genie unlocks the box, lets out a beautiful slave woman and goes to sleep. The woman sees Shah Zaman and Shahriyar in the tree and demands they have sex with her or else she'll wake up the genie and have them killed. The brothers reluctantly comply, and then go back to Shahriyar's kingdom, having found that even the most powerful genie has a "disloyal" wife. Shahriyar starts killing women the morning after marrying them until Scheherazade, the daughter of Shahriyar's Vizier, marries him, and begins telling stories which shape the basis of the core form of the *Nights*, and which have, in the G-manuscript at least, at their essence, a unique moral message that Shahriyar finally seems to come to understand.

It is not difficult, surprisingly given the comic nature of the frame story, to find a serious translation or academic work about the *Nights*. Most all conversation about the story collection seems to take the frame story, and the text itself, soberly. Even one of the earliest writings about the *Nights*, in the 10th century AD book *Kitab Al-Fihrist*, by Ibn an-Nadim (Abu'l Faraj Muhammed bin Is'haq an-Nadim), is critical of the work, calling it "truly a coarse book, without warmth in the telling."²⁶ Alongside Ibn an-Nadim's dismissal, more recent scholarship on the *Nights* often attempts to find some

serious reason why Scheherazade's tales enchant, or why Shahriyar was so enraged, and most readings accept Shahriyar's anger as a given, as something with roots in righteousness. Most also see the heroine Scheherazade as some sort of perfect wife, one who will assuage the angry king and prove his anger about all women to be wrong. This serious reading has likely to do with Galland's translation into French, and the subsequent anonymous "Grub Street"²⁷ edition in 1706, both of which situated the frame story in a humorless tone. But also, perhaps, this has to do with the culturalized identity of the *Nights* that took place, particularly in the 19th century, with Arabic manuscripts like "Calcutta I" (1814), one of the earliest Arabic versions of the *Nights*, but printed in India by the British East India Company, in order to have British soldiers and officers learn Arabic. Other versions and translations that emphasized the Middle Eastern background and origins of the *Nights* like the English translation by Edward William Lane's (1838-1840), and its accompanying text of notes on Egyptian culture, and Richard F. Burton's version (1885-1888) and its own emphasis on the anthropology and religion of the Middle East, also added to a humorless reading of the frame story. The notion of the *Nights* as a serious and scientific sourcebook of potentially factual cultural information has seemed to have led, in some large part, to the generally misguided outlook on the *Nights* in later scholarship and other writing about it. Duncan MacDonald, one of the foremost Western *Nights* scholars of the 20th century, wrote that "the diligent student of the Nights is in contact with the naked mind of Islam,"²⁸ couching the story collection as a very distinct, and serious, anthropological examination of Islamic beliefs. Peter Beaumont situates the frame story into Lacanian psychoanalysis: "No doubt the perennial interest of the story derives from the complex ways in which sexuality and

violence figure in it, and, in recent years, psychoanalytic and feminist readings have focused on these issues,”²⁹ without going into the humor of the situation much at all and emphasizing the violent and serious drama of the frame story. Other readings, like Ferial Ghazoul’s *Nocturnal Poetics: The Arabian Nights in Comparative Context*, or Sandra Naddaff’s *Arabesque: Narrative Structure and the Aesthetics of Repetition in 1001 Nights*, look at ways in which the narrative forms a dramatic matrix of sorts, relying on drama mainly as the force behind the nature of the stories in the *Nights*. David Pinault also turns the frame tale into a serious drama: “King Shahrayar’s behavior in the outermost frame is triggered by his first wife’s deceit and infidelity. This leads the king to kill one wife after another; and Scheherazade tries to ward off this violence by offering stories as ransom for her life.”³⁰ He further characterizes the nature of all of the stories in the G-manuscript as ones that “feature prominently the threat of violence and the use of stories to postpone or avert this violence,”³¹ rather than ones with an inherent satirical and sexual humor. Other translations of the *Nights* insist on a highly serious frame tale as well, where Shahriyar’s despair and anger seem to be the forefront of the reason behind the drama of the tales themselves. From the 1706 “Grub Street” version, to translations by Lane, Burton, NJ Dawood, Husain Haddawy, Malcolm Lyons, to filmic portrayals such as Hallmark’s 2000 made for television mini-series *Arabian Nights*, all heighten the seriousness of the anger of Shahriyar, and the tragedy he suffered at the hands of his first wife’s infidelity.

The serious tone of the *Nights* began in earnest with Galland’s French translation, and the subsequent 1706 Grub Street English version - both are significantly less humorous than the G-manuscript. Galland heightens the drama by insisting on a very

grave reading of Shahriyar's rage, which, while certainly a grim situation if it were real, was not given such embellished tragedy in the main Arabic manuscript Galland worked from. During Shahriyar's scourge of the town's marriageable girls, for example, both Galland and Grub Street highlight the incredible tragedy that would surely take place if such violence were actually committed against the people of the kingdom. Grub Street's translation, very close to Galland's French, has it as: "The rumour of this unparalleled barbarity occasioned a general consternation in the city, where there was nothing but crying and lamentation. Here a father in tears, and inconsolable for the loss of his daughter; and there tender mothers dreading lest theirs should have the same fate, making the air to resound beforehand with their groans."³² In the Arabic manuscript, however, this situation is quickly gone over, without the extensive drama, Haddawy translates this passage as "He continued to do this until all the girls perished, their mothers mourned, and there arose a clamor among the fathers and mothers, who called the plague upon his head."³³ Although Haddawy does away with the rhymes of the Arabic manuscript's tone, his rendering of its content is fairly close to the original, which, given the ludicrous nature of the situation, and the extent of Shahriyar's destruction, is still comical in that the parents, in this extreme situation of incredible loss, have as their reaction to merely curse Shahriyar, and wish him harm. Also there is no threat to other marriageable women in the town, unlike Galland and Grub Street which have a great deal of foreboding, because in the G-manuscript, and Haddawy, all of the girls are now killed, and there is nothing left to do besides curse the person who did this to them. The G-manuscript, and Haddawy, both do away with the extensive drama of the possibility of such a thing ever happening, because it is so extreme and bizarre, and yet Galland, and

Grub Street, and in fact most translations since the 18th century, treat this situation as a great tragedy that actually could take place.

In addition, the sexuality of the G-manuscript has often been downplayed, by Galland and Grub Street at first, but scores of others later. Other Arabic versions, many of which, like the version known as “Bulaq,” first published in Cairo in 1835, actually retain more of the humor and sexuality than non-Arabic translations. Most recently the Egyptian government published a “heritage” edition of the *Nights* in 2010, and a conservative religious group there tried, unsuccessfully, to ban it and jail and fine its publishers. The event had significant international media coverage. The conservative group’s justification was over the explicit nature of the frame tale, and many of the stories inside the collection.³⁴ Indeed it would be hard pressed to find any society, religiously or politically accepting of Shahriyar’s first wife’s behavior in the garden. This is because it is an absurd situation, meant to be absurd, and meant to be an incredible, sexually oriented, fiction. It is an absurdity heightened by Shah Zaman’s sudden joy at his brother’s greater misfortune, the overdone number of participants following Shah Zaman’s wife’s relatively “minor” infraction, the frequency of times the scene is repeated, the class disparity between the wife and her lover, the all-powerful genie and the locked but promiscuous lover on top of his head, the incredibly violent and enormous response of Shahriyar, and, perhaps most importantly, the language used, in the G-manuscript in particular, to describe it all.

In addition much of the sexuality of the *Nights*, particularly in its earliest incarnation, is performed in contrast to manmade civilized structures and political systems. This further defines a repeated theme that seems to suggest that sexuality is not

something able to maintain under “civilized” circumstances. Shah Zaman’s wife is inside, in the castle, but she is with a member of the household staff, a relative outsider. This slight notion is given further exaggeration in Shahriyar’s garden, the household staff engage in sexual activity outside, in the garden, surrounded by nature, and a fountain, and Mas’ud is not even part of the household, he jumps down directly out of nature, insisting perhaps that nature is triumphing over humanity’s attempts to stifle it. This motif is repeated several times throughout the G-manuscript – the genie’s captive woman calls Shahriyar and Shah Zaman down out of the trees, much like Mas’ud, “The Porter and the Three Ladies” of Baghdad frolic in a fountain, in a contained, but clearly representative, nature, the ensorcelled Prince’s wife actually leaves the confines of civilization behind every single night to spend time with her lover, who lives off the land and the detritus and trash of civilization, and these are just a few of the initial stories of the G-manuscript, there are many other situations where it is clear that nature trumps civilization, especially in matters of sex.

If you take the humor and the sexuality out of the frame tale, as most versions have done, the frame tale’s relationship with the other stories in the collection wouldn’t make any clear sense. It becomes a situation where the king rightfully spirals into depressive madness due to a serious infidelity. A situation, when stated in this manner, that becomes dull, straightforward, serious, and humorlessly righteous, not to mention foreign to the general tone of the *Nights* itself. Taken in this manner it also becomes easy to, as so many have often done, only generally define the reasons why Shahriyar is so taken with Scheherazade’s stories. The stories are moral tales of “cliffhangers” with the endings left off of them in order to prolong the king’s interest. Fatima Malti-Douglas

likens the drama of the storytelling to, and many others too-generally characterize the frame tale as, “the ultimate in female trickery, representing a continual game of attraction (the storytelling) followed by denial of satisfaction (the end of the story, which must await yet another night).”³⁵ And yet this reason cannot possibly be true, if only by the fact that many stories do end before sunrise, or that no clear dramatic moment presents itself as Scheherazade stops. And perhaps more importantly most of her stories are about sexuality and its problematic interactions in a falsely constructed human world so how is she “tricking” him? It seems, rather, that her moral instructions about the comical sexuality of the “real” world is what must hold Shahriyar’s attention because the themes are so pervasive throughout most all of her tales. This seems to be the only plausible answer to why Shahriyar does not kill Scheherazade. A more serious or more general reading, highlighted by the Malti-Douglas quote above, strips the frame tale of its point: the undermining quality of a humorous situation set in an unlikely plotline featuring and highlighting a joyful sexuality at odds with a drab and restrictive manmade social setup. Hasan El-Shamy also argues against notions that Shahriyar fell in love with Scheherazade, offering the compelling evidence that the word “love” does not exist anywhere in the G-manuscript, and so “it may be concluded that the postulated transformations of Shahriyar’s character from cruelty to loving kindness, or Shahrzad’s body from an object of carnal desire to the ideal role of lover and mother are not supported by any textual or contextual evidence.”³⁶ Indeed, Scheherazade, given the stories she tells, does not seem to be positioning herself as an object of romantic love, or a future wife, much at all. And Shahriyar does not have to “love” her in order to listen to her, he does not have to (nor should, given the nature of the frame tale, he want to) find in

her a noble and committed wife, and as such, she *must* be some other type of person holding his attention for some other reason.

Persuasive evidence for this humorous reading comes from a close examination of the G-manuscript, and Haddawy, and in the early mentions of the *Nights* found in Ibn an-Nadim, Al-Masudi, and in the Abbott fragment. In these documentations, the earliest mentions and forms of the *Nights*, exists a single word that adds credibility to this essay's overall argument. The word is "*jariya*," its plural is *jawari*, and in Arabic it, like many words in Arabic, has a set of several different meanings. These meanings range from the general "girl" but also can mean "slave-girl," "nurse," and, according to some 10th century writings by Al-Jahiz and others, "concubine" or "singing slave-girl."³⁷ If Scheherazade is a *jariya*, as she is called in the G-manuscript, and if this could mean she is a concubine, or a slave-girl with singing and poetic ability, it makes sense that her stories contain visions of unhindered sexuality, as she is taking the place of the traditionally defined "wife" and redefining it. There is some evidence that these slave girls were a common part of some lives, especially those of the rich, during, particularly, the Abbasid Caliphate. In addition to their sexual favors, if they were that type of slave, many also performed songs and poetry, and were some of the only women to have public agency, in terms of where they could and couldn't go in public and to other households.

In the G-manuscript both Scheherazade and Duniyazad are referred to as "*jariya*" when their father, the Grand Vizier is called "*Abu Jariyatayn*,"³⁸ which can be translated as "Father of the two (slave-)girls." It could potentially mean simply young "girls," however, the word "*jariya*" is used to describe Shahriyar's wife's household staff as well, who engage in the sexual misconduct in the king's garden, and here the connotation is

that they are clearly under the employ of the king – whether they were concubines or singing girls is a secondary, but ultimately, here, unimportant consideration – what matters is that they were female servants or slaves. More compellingly, Haddawy translates *jariya*, when used for the household staff as “slave-girls,”³⁹ and yet translates the same word *jariya*, when used for the father of Scheherazade and Dunyazad, as simply “girls,” in “the father of the two girls.”⁴⁰ Haddawy renders one group as clearly slaves and the other two merely as more neutral girls, even though the same word is used. In *The Fihrist*, Ibn an-Nadim mentions Scheherazade as well, and actually calls her a “*jariya*” as well,⁴¹ which Macdonald translates as “maiden,”⁴² but which Bayard Dodge translates as “concubine,”⁴³ clearly making a connection between the word and the notion of Scheherazade as a slave-girl with some sexual connotations, if not at least providing some evidence for the word’s flexible definition or problematic translation. Al-Masudi mentions Scheherazade as the daughter of the king’s grand vizier, and that she had a “*jariya*” named “Dinazad,” which Meynard translates, in French as “*esclave*,” or “slave,” but does not label Scheherazade as a *jariya*, or anything other than “daughter.”⁴⁴ Al-Masudi and the Meynard translation do, however, give further evidence that *jariya* was a word meaning a slave of some sort and that Dunyazad was one. The Abbott fragment does not say who Scheherazade or Dunyazad are, but does have the latter calling the former (though Scheherazade’s name is actually missing from the fragment) “delectable one,” which, according to Abbott suggests that Dunyazad was “almost certainly not a younger sister but an older nurse,”⁴⁵ but seems to also be a curiously sensual title itself. The most compelling evidence, however, comes from the G-manuscript itself, where both Dunyazad and Scheherazade are called *jariya*, as are the slaves of the household, and

other, non-married and sexually active women in the rest of the stories. And yet, despite the very real possibility of her being so, in most versions of the *Nights* Scheherazade is never really seen in as a slave-girl, or concubine, nor is she referred to as possibly being one in any *Nights* scholarship I have seen. Many of the earliest translations of the *Nights* simply define her in generalized terms, which may have led to an obscuration of her origins and hindered a clear reading of the story collection.

There seems to be enough writing from the time period and enough of a general consensus about these slave girls to be able to say for certain that they existed, not only as household servants or nurses, but also as concubines. Nadia Maria El-Cheikh outlines several stories, culled from various sources of the writings of Al-Tanukhi, a 10th century judge from Baghdad, in which slave girls feature prominently, in cases brought before him, and in situations where they bankrupted men who had fallen in love with them, including one “student from Khurasan whose father sent him his yearly expenses: He bought a *jariya*, liked her and they became fond of each other. She stayed with him for years. His pattern was to take up a loan...and as soon as his father’s money would reach him he would settle his debt.”⁴⁶ El-Cheikh outlines the dual nature of the roles of wives and concubines wherein “the legitimate wife benefits from a superior status, but in appearance only. For the concubine ended by becoming a true ‘anti-wife.’”⁴⁷ Indeed, Scheherazade replaces the wives of Shahriyar in a very particular and compelling fashion as an anti-wife.

Raja Rouna, in her reading of the work of author Fatima Mernessi, relates the *jawari*, and their status, to the existence of the *Nights* during the same time period, writing how Mernassi “unveils how the low status of women (as slaves) is associated

with wealth and glory, especially with the publication of *The Arabian Nights* in the nineteenth century,”⁴⁸ suggesting that later versions of the *Nights* insisted on a sort of class and gendered reading of the social setting that the *Nights* was borne out of. Both Rouna and Mernassi have written extensively on dispelling myths regarding a romanticized notion of the harem, but focusing on further defining the *jawari*, not necessarily as slave-girls/concubines with low social standing, but rather ones with quite a bit of agency, surprising intelligence and social respect. In a footnote Rouna quotes author Hasna Lebbady, on the problematic definitions of *jawari*, regarding contemporary understandings of their class status: “Lebbady states: ‘As in al-Andalus, to be slave girls or *jawari*...was not necessarily to be looked down upon. In some respects, it is difficult to tell whether it was better to be a free woman or a slave.’...She notes that these women had belonged to the sophisticated milieus.”⁴⁹ The position of the esteemed concubine would seem to make sense vis-à-vis Scheherazade and her agency, not only in her demand to her father to marry Shahriyar, and her bold plan of survival, but also in the contents and manner of her stories, her intelligence, and her agency and power over Shahriyar as well.

In *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures*, an examination of sexuality in mainly, given their prevalence, 10th century AD texts, Sahar Amer uses several examples of stories from the *Nights* and other works that feature lesbianism, cross-dressing, and other openly expressed forms of sexuality. Amer also mentions Al-Jahiz’s *Risalat al-qiyān*, or *Epistle on Singing-Girls*, a well known document which gives an overview to the *qiyān*, a particular type of singing *jariya*, known to be common, and accepted members of 10th century Baghdad. The term

qiyān seems to have been, at times, interchangeable with *jariya*, in some writings. “*Qina* (sic) is synonymous with *jariya*,”⁵⁰ writes Mernissi. Sahar Amer outlines the qualities of the *qiyān*, who “were educated to provide entertainment through various skills: music (singing, composition, performing on a musical instrument), dancing, storytelling, and sexual pleasure” and that “Intellectual skills and game playing were also essential to a *qayna*’s repertoire.”⁵¹ Amer also quotes from the book *Kitab al-aghani*, “*Book of Songs*,” by 10th century Abbasid writer Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani who provides further evidence for the literary skills of the *jawari*, with Inan being a “good poet,” Fadl Al-Sha’ria (“The Poetess”) having “held her own literary salon till her death,” and Arib, who “was a skilled singer, and a good poetess.”⁵² Amer also uses the story of Tawaddud, a fictional *qayna* from the *Nights*, as evidence that the position was widespread and well known during this time period. Jamel Eddine Bencheikh also mentions the history of the *qayna* in his study of the *Nights* story “Ali b. Bakkar and Shams al-Nahar,” outlining their importance and prevalence in Abbasid Baghdad: “Shams personifies a *qayna* of high rank at the court of Baghdad and is a contemporary of Badhl, ‘Arib, Mutayyam, Shariya, to whom the *Kitab al-Aghani* has devoted numerous notes and who were the spouses and mothers of many a Caliph.”⁵³ He writes in an endnote, about the peculiar number of educated and talented women characters in the *Nights* that “the number of young women capable of reciting poems and of playing the lute is great. So is the number of those able to speak on ethics, the art of government, ecclesiastical science, and many other disciplines where their erudition works wonders and causes some king to fall in love with them.”⁵⁴

Fuad Matthew Caswell's *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyani in the Early Abbasid Era* (2011) is probably the most comprehensive overview of the *qiyani/jawari* available in English to date. In the book Caswell provides short biographies of documented, real-life 10th century Baghdad *qiyani*, many of those mentioned above outlining qualities in them which mirror the fictional Scheherazade in many significant ways, even though she is not mentioned in the book. "By dint of her upbringing and of her profession she is worldly...yet she is capable of deep and sincere loyalty to master and lover."⁵⁵ She also "is marked by moral laxity, lack of inhibition in the use of impolite expressions and by the extensive use of erotic-elegiac poetry."⁵⁶ In addition, according to Caswell and his sources, the *jawari* would be extensively trained in history, literature, poetry, religion, seduction, and the best ones would be considered dangerous for their allure. Not all *jawari* were sexual, however, some were slaves who sang, danced or told poetry only.

Scheherazade fits all of these definitions of a *jariya*, she is a kind of "anti-wife," because no other woman was able to fill the traditional position, she is a part of the "higher milieu," part of the inner workings of the kingdom, is respected and has agency, her father agrees to her plan, she tells mainly - in the G-manuscript - erotic stories, and, perhaps most importantly, she is mentioned as extremely well educated and literate. Here is how Scheherazade is rendered in Haddawy, the only clear character description of her in the *Nights* of the G-manuscript: "The older daughter, Shahrazad, had read the books of literature, philosophy, and medicine. She knew poetry by heart, had studied historical reports, and was acquainted with the sayings of men and the maxims of sages and kings. She was intelligent, knowledgeable, wise, and refined. She had read and learned."⁵⁷ The

description mirrors that of several *jawari* and *qayna* outlined in Amer, Caswell and Bencheikh, and is especially remarkable to consider when most women, in general, at this time period did not have access to this sort of literary or cultural education, unless they were *jawari*.⁵⁸ There was, of course, some access to education among the women of the higher classes, however, given the nature of Scheherazade's stories, it seems highly unlikely that a non-*jariya*, educated female, would so openly espouse this theme.

Besides her agency, position and storytelling abilities, there is little to suggest, in terms of her actions, that Scheherazade is a courtesan of the type of woman fetishised in so many Orientalist artworks, mainly from Europe, during the 18th and 19th centuries. In her earliest incarnations we never see her engaged in any sort of sexual behavior, nor do we have a physical description of her, nor does she speak in any directly sexual manner, concerning herself, toward Shahriyar. Ibn an-Nadim mentions that she has a child in a version he had read, but the G-manuscript does not have an ending to it. Many of the authors listed in this chapter have done extensive writing on this subject, attempting to show how the *jawari*, while some did engage in sexual activity, were for the most part, very different types of people from contemporary notions of prostitution, or Orientalist misunderstandings of the harem. When placed into the context of the evidence of the figure of the *jawari*, and given that both the frame story, and many of the stories of many versions of the *Nights* are of a highly sexual nature, and the fact that Scheherazade is a well-educated woman at this time period, the evidence that Scheherazade is a *jariya*, as indeed she is called in the G-manuscript and elsewhere, is extraordinarily compelling.

Even if she were not a slave girl as outlined above, Scheherazade tells some very particular stories to Shahriyar, stories which have more than mere suspense or adventure

in them to keep the king's attention, and stories which include uncertain sexual morality, several instances of infidelity, and many mentions of concubines or courtesans, all strikingly curious tales to tell to a murderous king who is angry about his wife's infidelity. In "The First Old Man's Tale,"⁵⁹ one of the very first stories of the *Nights*, a man is sad because his jealous wife, who was also a witch, turned his mistress into a cow, and his son by the mistress into a bull. The mistress is butchered but the son is spared. The story's overall point is that the jealous wife was wrong for being so angry, because the victim is clearly seen to be the man, a very puzzling morality for Scheherazade to tell to Shahriyar if the point of the story is to merely entertain him. "The Tale of the Husband and the Parrot"⁶⁰ features a cheating wife, "The Tale of the King's Son and the She-Ghoul"⁶¹ has a woman asking a man for help and tricking him so that she and her ghoul family can eat him, "The Tale of the Enchanted King"⁶² features a cheating wife who drugs her rich husband every night so she can sleep with her lover. When her jealous husband injures her lover, she transforms the lower half of her husband's body into a black stone. Every night as she cares for her lover in front of her husband, she also whips the upper-half of the body of her husband. Eventually she is punished, but the overall message of the story was that their marriage, one born of political and familial union, was not sexually, or otherwise, fulfilling. "The Story of the Porter and the Three Ladies"⁶³ features a working class poor man who ends up spending the night naked with three beautiful women in a fountain in their mansion. In "The Second Dervish's Tale"⁶⁴ a man is turned into an ape by a demon, jealous because the man had slept with the demon's lover. The Third Dervish, in his tale, finds himself in a luxurious palace with "forty girls, sumptuously dressed and lavishly adorned,"⁶⁵ one of whom he must choose

to be his lover for the next forty days and nights. Both “The Christian Broker’s Tale”⁶⁶ and “The Steward’s Tale: The Young Man from Baghdad and Lady Zubaida’s Maid”⁶⁷ feature beautiful rich independent women who fall in love with humble shopkeepers and give them money and romance. “The Jewish Physician’s Tale: The Young Man from Mosul and the Murdered Girl”⁶⁸ has a similar set up, with the rich woman taking the action and sleeping with the man. “The Tailor’s Tale”⁶⁹ features a young man obsessed with a young woman he got a glance of at her window, and a barber who tries to look out for the young man’s safety. “The Tale of the First Brother, the Hunchbacked Tailor”⁷⁰ features a similarly obsessed man, a tailor who makes clothes for free because the woman he is in love with uses him. The tailor eventually tries to kiss the lady, is caught by the police and physically punished and humiliated by being paraded through the streets “with a crier proclaiming ‘This is the punishment of those who trespass upon other people’s wives.’”⁷¹ Perhaps an appropriate moral to tell Shahriyar, and yet, the hero of this story is largely seen as the victim, of his lost love, of his nature, and of the cruelty of the married woman he is obsessed with. The story of “Baqbaqa the Paraplegic”⁷² has a woman taking Baqbaqa to her mansion under the pretence of a banquet and sex with a beautiful woman but instead a group of women slap him around, shave his moustache off, and dye his eyebrows red. One woman then tempts him sexually until he is erect and naked, and then drops him through a trap door into the middle of the crowded marketplace where he is beaten by a crowd. The story of “Faqfaq the Blind”⁷³ features a den of thieves who trick people into coming into their house to see beautiful women and then rob them. The story of the brother with “the Cropped of Ears”⁷⁴ has the main character dreaming of the beautiful woman he can marry with all of the money he made

in business, only to lose it all to a woman and her slave, who steal it from him. The story of the Sixth Brother⁷⁵ has him being romanced by the wife of a man who took him in and helped him. The man finds the sixth brother sleeping with his wife and cuts off his penis. “The Story of Nur Al-Din Ali Ibn-Bakkar and the Slave Girl”⁷⁶ is a lengthy tale of love between a *jariya* of Haroun Al-Raschid’s named Shams al-Nahar, and Nur Al-Din, a businessman she romances by secretly taking him to the palace where she feeds him sumptuous feasts with her other female servants. “The Story of the Slave Girl and Nur Al-Din Ibn Khaqan” features a rich king who buys the most beautiful virgin slave girl he can find for himself, only to have his son Nur Al-Din sleep with her first. Nur al-Din, while drunk, “undid her trousers and took her virginity.”⁷⁷ “The Story of Jullnar of the Sea” features a king who “enjoyed having many women and concubines, so that whenever they came by any slave-girl, they brought her to him, and if he liked her, he would buy her at the highest price.”⁷⁸ “The Story of Qamar al-Zaman and the Princess Boudour,” a story in the G-manuscript but omitted from Haddawy’s *The Arabian Nights*, features an explicit romance between two women, Boudour and Hayat al-Nefous. Sahar Amer writes, “After their initial, overt sexual encounter, Boudour and Hayat al-Nefous spend the next two nights ‘kissing’ and ‘caressing.’”⁷⁹ As Amer points out, Haddawy later publishes a much less sexual translation of this story, but only in his additional book *The Arabian Nights II*, and from different sources than the G-manuscript, due, perhaps to a lack of an ending of the tale in the G-manuscript.⁸⁰ Haddawy confesses that the Bulaq version of the *Nights*, the one he translated “Qamar” from, was edited for moral purposes, however. He accuses the “editors” of the Bulaq to have “regarded the tales with condescension, judging them to be entertaining in substance but ‘vulgar’ in style, and

appointed themselves to the task of ‘improving’ them.”⁸¹ The portion of “Qamar” from the G-manuscript is translated, in part, by Amer in her book, and is more explicit than that of Bulaq. This list of stories collectively, however, are the oldest stories of Scheherazade, ones clearly and distinctly, and collectively emphasizing sexuality and female agency, even, or especially that of a female slave-girl, but also married women, and a lot of unmarried rich women, in matters of sexuality and finances, and a satirized over insistence on every person’s incapacity to forge a human-created order, particularly in politics, romantic love and business.

Given this outline of all of the stories in the G-manuscript it seems unfortunate that a persistence remains, in most *Nights*-scholarship, on suggesting that just about any type of story can be a *Nights* story. Sandra Naddaff, though not alone, writes that “the text possesses an ability, indeed a willingness, to accommodate ultimately any tale between its ever-flexible borders.”⁸² Muhsin Ali writes that “the volumes consist of romances, love stories, tales of roguery and adventure, accounts of some historical significance, and moralistic or philosophical pieces,”⁸³ making it “impossible to classify and categorize its popular appeal under one or two headings,” and instead understanding it as “a repository of both realistic and fantastic themes.”⁸⁴ Mia Gerhardt ascribes only very general characteristics of stories to the *Nights*, ones that could be equally applied to a lot of literary works, such as “stock descriptions,” “opening and sometimes very elaborate, closing formulas,” “rhyming prose,” and “poetry,”⁸⁵ further categorizing the tales of the *Nights* into the very generally outlined chapters “Love-Stories,” “Travel-Stories,” “Fairy-Tales,” and “Learning, Wisdom, Piety,” suggesting that the work “offers many different kinds of stories.”⁸⁶ Susanne Enderwitz writes that the frame tale “is a

story capable of integrating other stories whatever their plot may be.”⁸⁷ Given the nature of many of the translations of the *Nights*, and indeed the larger variety of themes in their stories versus those of the G-manuscript, it is not difficult to find similar, reasonable, conclusions about the flexibility of Scheherazade’s borders.

Gerhardt, and others, have remarked, actually on the uncertain morality of some of the initial stories of the *Nights*, suggesting that they might not be the best stories, thematically, to soothe an enraged despot. Gerhardt finds this to be evidence that the original storyteller just meant the reader to forget about the frame tale at all, and instead concentrate on the stories inside the collection. Writing that “Shehrezad appears to be rubbing in the king’s conjugal misfortune, rather than helping him to get over it; unless we interpret her choice as destined to show the king that he is not the only one to suffer, but nothing bears out this interpretation.”⁸⁸ Gerhardt actually comes close, here, to the conclusions of this article, but her reliance only on Enno Littmann’s German translation of Calcutta II to base her study on meant that she was also faced with stories not in the G-manuscript, such as “Sindbad the Sailor,” and as such did not, could not really, find one clear reason for Scheherazade’s moral ambiguity in the initial tales other than the flexible nature of the frame. Hasan El-Shamy, who studied mainly the G-manuscript in his article, also mentions this pervasive theme where the work portrays “faithless wives seeking revenge on unloved husbands or simply searching for sheer carnal gratification,”⁸⁹ and yet does not posit this to be the main theme of the work as a whole, instead using it as evidence that no “love” or romantic reasons, outlined in Malti-Douglas and Enderwitz, could be the reason Scheherazade’s life is ultimately spared.

Is Scheherazade a feminist, as many⁹⁰ have often suggested, because she bests the male ruler's violence with her wisdom? Muhsin al-Musawi writes of how the *Nights* has often been seen as such: "Among contemporary feminists, it is an apt trope for women's ingenuity, wit, and resourcefulness to outwit and overrule patriarchal practices."⁹¹ It also seems insufficiently defined and generalized to dub her this, without explicating what is meant by the term "feminist" (i.e. pacifying a male ruler's violent tendencies to maintain sociopolitical standards that existed before the events in question - how does this constitute feminism?). Is she a savior of all women in the kingdom? In the G-manuscript she is the last marriageable woman, so no, besides perhaps future women, and yet other versions make her into this savior figure for the remaining kingdom's virgins and their families. Is her ultimate morality, however, one that suggests Shahriyar needs to adjust his understanding of sexuality and nature, "feminist," within this reading? It certainly seems to displace heteronormativity, and traditional male-dominated institutions like marriage, so in this sense, absolutely. Perhaps not every variant of the *Nights* clearly has these sexual motifs as a major part of their narratives. These findings, however, offer a compelling reexamination of the *Nights* and posit the potential for some aspect of Scheherazade's "morality" to remain, regardless of how censorious the version of the *Nights* is.

In the end, the point of Scheherazade, given the very distinct borders of the story collection itself, is that the "solution" is to not have a wife, in the traditional sense. If, as we must do, we are to enter the confines of the "reality" of the *Nights*, in order to see its point, within the frame story we know, for certain, that not only wives but even concubines (the genie's, for example) are "unfaithful," and that the false social constructs

of sexual order are rarely successful. It cannot be, in this world, that Scheherazade is the only “faithful” woman in the world. This is the insular reality that the frame story persists in telling, the reality at work in its fiction, regardless of what may account for reality outside of its pages, and regardless of this theme’s potentially controversial gender-related “joke.” She is not, cannot be, as Fatima Malti-Douglas sums up, “educating this ruler in the ways of a nonproblematic heterosexual relationship.”⁹² Nor, given the stories she tells, can Shahriyar possibly fall “in love with her for her purity, virtue, and piety,”⁹³ as Susanne Enderwitz and many others have insisted he must have. There is no such thing as a nonproblematic romantic relationship, given the confines of the frame tale, and within all of the stories of the G-manuscript as well, nor, as Al-Shamy points out is there much romantic “love” at all in the entire work, nor is there any clear evidence in any of sort of clearly demarcated virtue in any of her tales. Scheherazade cannot possibly tell Shahriyar that she, his newest wife, will be faithful, it’s just not an integral part of the narrative system of the *Nights*. She must be telling him something else, and what that something else is certainly seems to be that Shahriyar’s vision of reality is wrong, that in fact, what is needed is an acceptance of the world in its natural state and an acceptance of his lack of control over things, particularly sexual things. Within this very sexual narrative structure, the stories reproduce themselves, and the reader, and Shahriyar, are enveloped into this vision of the world, not only in its narrative aesthetics but also, more importantly, in the contents of its tales. While many of the oldest versions of the *Nights* did not have this number in their title, *1001* seems suggestive of a type of “bound infinity” between the covers of the *Nights*: “1∞1,” and certainly captures the essence of Scheherazade. A boundless symbol attempting to be framed by a structure (the first and

last page of the book) that can never truly contain it, because the stories never end. The missing conclusion of the G-manuscript seems like a perfect physical manifestation of this boundlessness. This representation of an interminable feminine sexual energy up against a satirically falsely constructed world is the *Nights*, and is its very peculiar definition beyond the general, and this seems to be what the *Nights* has always been about, and Scheherazade, as a *jariya*, is the perfect representative to express this sort of meaning in her tales.

¹² *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources: Part 3: Introduction and Indexes*, Muhsin Mahdi, ed., (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1984), 5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3 Volumes. Also see Paul Nurse, *Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2010), and Dwight F. Reynolds, "A Thousand and One Nights: a history of the text and its reception," *Arabic Literature in the Post-Classical Period*, Roger Allen and D.S. Richards, eds., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 270-292.

¹⁴ Nabia Abbott, "A Ninth-Century Fragment of the 'Thousand Nights,'" *The Arabian Nights Reader*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 56.

¹⁵ *The Fihrist of Ibn an-Nadim*, trans. Bayard Dodge, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

¹⁶ Al-Masudi, *Muruj adh-dhahab*, trans. by C. Barbier de Meynard as *Les praries d'or*, (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1861).

¹⁷ Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, (London: IB Taurus, 2004), 159.

¹⁸ Naddaff, *Arabesque: Narrative Structure and the Aesthetics of Repetition in 1001 Nights*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 32.

¹⁹ Beaumont, *Slave of Desire: Sex, Love, and Death in The 1001 Nights*, (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 42.

²⁰ "Sexuality," *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia, Volume Two*, Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, eds., (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004), 700-1.

²¹ *The Arabian Nights*, Husain Haddawy, trans., (New York: Knopf, 1990), xix.

²² *Ibid.*, xxxi.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Mahdi, 35 (see n. 1).

²⁵ "Ransom Motif," *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia, Volume Two*, 687 (see n. 9).

²⁶ *Fihrist*, 713-14 (see n. 4).

- ²⁷ See *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, Robert L. Mack, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).
- ²⁸ MacDonald, "From Arabian Nights to Spirit," *The Muslim World* 9, no. 4 (1919): 336.
- ²⁹ Beaumont, 43 (see n. 8).
- ³⁰ Pinault, *Story-Telling Techniques in the Arabian Nights*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1992), 9.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ³² *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, 10 (see n. 17).
- ³³ Haddawy, 11 (see n. 10).
- ³⁴ For an overview of this story, and an extensive bibliography of related online news stories about this issue, see the label "egypt," at my blog *The Journal of the 1001 Nights*, <http://journalofthenights.blogspot.com/>.
- ³⁵ Malti-Douglas, "Homosexuality, Heterosexuality, and Shahrazad," *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia, Volume One*, Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, eds., (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004), 39.
- ³⁶ El-Shamy, "A Motif Index of *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*: Its Relevance to the Study of Culture, Society, the Individual, and Character Transmutation," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 3 (2005): 267.
- ³⁷ See Al-Jahiz, *Kitab al-Qiyan*, trans. by A.F.L. Beeston as *The Epistle on Singing-Girls*, (Warminster, 1980), or Al-Tanukhi, *al-Faraj ba'd al-shidda*, 'A. al-Shalji, ed., (Beirut, 1978) for two commonly used sources.
- ³⁸ *The Thousand and One Nights: From the Earliest Known Sources*, Muhsin Mahdi, ed., (Leiden: Brill, 1984), 25.
- ³⁹ Haddawy, 8 (see n. 19).
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁴¹ Ibn Al-Nadim, *Kitab Al-Fihrist: Mit Anmerkungen Herausgegeben von Gustav Flugel*, (Leipzig: Verlag Von F.C.W. Vogel, 1871), 304.
- ⁴² MacDonald here is quoted in Abbott, 56 (see n. 3).
- ⁴³ *The Fihrist*, 713 (see n. 4).
- ⁴⁴ Macoudi, *Les Prairies D'Or*, translated by C. Barbier De Meynard, (Paris: L'Imprimerie Imperiale, 1865), 90.
- ⁴⁵ Abbott, 58 (see n. 3).
- ⁴⁶ El-Cheikh, "Women's History: A Study of al-Tanukhi," *Writing the Feminine: Women in Arab Sources*, Manuela Marin and Randi Deguilhem, eds., (London: IB Taurus, 2002), 134.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.
- ⁴⁸ Rhouni, *Secular and Islamic Feminist Critiques in the Work of Fatima Mernissi*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 2010), 145.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.
- ⁵⁰ As quoted in Fuad Matthew Caswell, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad: The Qiyan in the Early Abbasid Era*, (London: IB Taurus, 2011), 1.
- ⁵¹ Amer, *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures*, (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2008), 147.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 146-7.

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- ⁵³ Bencheikh, "Historical and Mythical Baghdad in the Tale of 'Ali b. Bakkar and Shams al-Nahar, or the Resurgence of the Imaginary," *The Arabian Nights Reader*, Ulrich Marzolph, ed., (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 250.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 263.
- ⁵⁵ Caswell, 2-3 (see n. 40).
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ⁵⁷ Haddawy, 11 (see n. 10).
- ⁵⁸ Scheherazade's educational status is extraordinary in the *Nights* of the G-manuscript, and this is, according to the narrative, part of her appeal to Shahriyar. Women in the 10th century who were not *jawari*, did, however, participate in cultural life, in, for example the literary salons known as *mujasalat*, but they were rare. For an overview of the *mujasalat*, see Samer M. Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons in the Middle Ages: Poetry, Public Performance, and the Presentation of the Past*, (Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 2010).
- ⁵⁹ Haddawy, 22 (see n. 10).
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 42.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 56.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 66.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 96.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 126.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 238.
- ⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 249.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 268.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 272.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*, 275.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 282.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 289.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 295.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 349.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 384.
- ⁷⁹ Amer, 79 (see n. 40).
- ⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 196, see her endnote n. 94.
- ⁸¹ Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and Other Popular Stories*, (New York: WW Norton, 1995), xii.
- ⁸² Naddaff, 5 (see n. 5).
- ⁸³ Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights*, (Washington DC: Three Continents Press, 1981), 4-5.
- ⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.
- ⁸⁵ Gerhardt, *The Art of Story-Telling: A Literary Study of the Thousand and One Nights*, (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1963), 45-6.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁸⁷ Enderwitz, "Practical Narrative, Theoretical Discussion, and Feminist Discourse," *The Arabian Nights in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Ulrich Marzolph, (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2007), 269.

⁸⁸ Gerhardt, 399.

⁸⁹ El-Shamy, "A Motif Index of *Alf Laylah wa Laylah*: Its Relevance to the Study of Culture, Society, the Individual, and Character Transmutation," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 36, no. 3 (2005): 267.

⁹⁰ See Irwin (see n. 6) for an extensive bibliography and overview of feminist readings of the *Nights*, or Fatima Mernissi's *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems*, (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), for just two examples, of which there are many, of the generalized "feminist" take on the frame tale.

⁹¹ Muhsin J. al-Musawi, *The Islamic Context of The Thousand and One Nights*, (New York: Columbia UP, 2009), 35.

⁹² Malti-Douglas, "Shahrazad Feminist," *The Arabian Nights Reader*, Ulrich Marzolph, ed., (Detroit: Wayne State U P, 2006), 359.

⁹³ Enderwitz, 264 (see n. 51).

Dislocating Scheherazade: *The 1001 Nights*, Paratextuality, and the Illusion of a Static Orientalist Text

In some obvious ways *The 1001 Nights* cannot be considered without its culturally related elements, whether they are those of setting, religion, origin, anthropology, colonial Orientalism, or responses to that Orientalism. An examination of the specific versions of the *Nights*, however, reveals that what the *Nights* seems to be, in relation to its origins, changes, in a very significant manner, over time. This new understanding is an important notion because it suggests that the *Nights*, as a whole, cannot be solely defined in terms of its Orientalist characteristics or responses to those characteristics. During the 18th century, most versions of the *Nights*, and specific responses to those versions, were situated in a much more generally fictional, largely fantastical - rather than truthfully cultural - based framework, as will be outlined in this chapter. The 19th century saw a marked turn toward the anthropological and historical setting of the *Nights*, largely via “paratextual” amendments by their translators and authors, and it is here that the story collection became much more fully entrenched into its Orientalist background that focused on how the *Nights* presented factual cultural information. Subsequent versions of the *Nights* since the 19th century, and scholarship on the *Nights* in general since then, seem to be mostly based on a critical response to those (mainly) European 19th century versions of the *Nights*. The *Nights* cannot only be defined by this relationship to Orientalism, however, as it is a text with a clearly shifting identity.

Gérard Genette's term "paratext" is a concept rooted in structuralist semiotics that is compellingly appropriate to consider when examining the differences between the 18th and 19th century versions of the *Nights*. Paratext is a term meaning anything accompanying a text, though seen as a relational part of that text, which may influence the reception or understanding of that text "to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption."⁹⁴ These elements are further divided into the "peritext" which can consist of illustrations, book covers, authors (names and reputations, etc.), titles, foot and endnotes, introductions, and more. Also included under the paratext is the "epitext," which can be interviews, essays, marketing and other elements about the work, particularly about its production, that may also have an influence on the text's presentation. Genette describes paratext philosophically as a "flexible space" containing "all those things which we are never certain belong to the text of a work but which contribute to present – or 'presentify' – the text," making it not just "a zone of transition between text and non-text ('hors-texte'), but also a zone of transaction."⁹⁵ As this chapter will make clear, the paratext of the *Nights* of the 19th century may have had more of a part of redefining the *Nights* and situating it within an Orientalist framework than even the stories in these versions themselves. These findings offer undeniable reasons to take into consideration the paratext in literary studies, given its obvious power in shaping, and misshaping, the reception and definition of a literary work, as well as provide a clear delineation between the 18th and 19th century *Nights*.

Obviously an important part of the mythology and history of the *Nights* has to be considered in light of Western scholars and translators who capitalized on a romantic notion of the Eastern "other" in their works. Without European Orientalism, without

French and English colonialism and political interest in the region, it would be highly unlikely that the *Nights* would have had the same successful response and sweeping influences that it has had, let alone get rediscovered and translated. The political engagement of France with the Ottoman Empire, and the Levant, during the 17th and 18th centuries gave way to the rediscovery of the *Nights* in the first place. The first European translator Antoine Galland's life provides sufficient evidence: funding by the French government, and by the French East India Company, provided Galland with the only means to undertake the acquisition and translation of his version of the *Nights*. Galland was under the employ of a colonially focused power, and "was only one of a number of western agents in the Ottoman Empire searching for oriental artifacts...the object of which, as [King Louis XIV's chief minister Jean-Baptiste] Colbert noted in a letter to Galland, was to '*orner nostre France des depouilles de l'Orient*' ('ornament our France with spoils of the Orient')." ⁹⁶ Throughout the late 1600s Galland would amass a collection of books and other artifacts from the Ottoman Empire, Syria and the Levant, all for France's acquisition. These were the basic political machineries at work behind his reasons for coming across the *Nights* in the first place. The political nature of how the first *Nights* came about, and the paratextual component of Galland as Orientalist expert, did not seem to affect, however, the overall textual narrative identity of the story collection, due in part to Galland's focus on highlighting the fantastic, rather than the cultural, elements in the stories. Genette talks about the author's name as a paratextual function but cautions that "The author's name fulfills a contractual function whose importance varies greatly depending on genre." ⁹⁷ In Galland's case his genre was

definitively fantasy, which may have contributed to his own professional background as being of secondary or little importance to the text itself.

In 1704 Galland's first volume of a series of stories consisting, in part, of a translation of an Arabic manuscript he had found in Syria, was published. Galland's book was called *Les mille et une nuit: contes arabes* ("The Thousand and One Nights: Arabian Tales"). It was the first known introduction of the *Nights* to Europe, and was, in part, a translation of the Arabic "G-manuscript" from Syria, dated to somewhere around the 1400s AD. To this day the G-manuscript, which resides in Paris' *Bibliothèque nationale*, is the oldest version of the *Nights* containing complete stories, known to exist anywhere. Galland's publisher, Claude Barbin, produced twelve printed volumes, between 1704 and 1717, yet only two of the volumes contained stories from the original Syrian manuscript. Many of the stories in Galland have uncertain origins, including some of the more well-known ones such as "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," and "Aladdin," both of which are stories Galland claimed to have heard, and read (though no written evidence has been found apart from Galland's claims), from an acquaintance named Hanna Diab, a Syrian from Aleppo who was in France. "Sindbad the Sailor," another story in Galland's first volume, also was placed within the *Nights* by Galland, after he translated a separate manuscript of the story and was told by someone it was part of the *Nights*. No known version of the *Nights* before Galland has "Sindbad" in it, however. The publication of the *Nights* was a financial and popular success for Galland and his publisher. Over the course of the 18th century the volumes of Galland were pirated and republished in several different languages, "running to more than thirty editions in French and English alone."⁹⁸ The work became so successful that Galland,

and his publisher, began inserting stories not found in the three-volume manuscript from Syria. Later French volumes bearing Galland's name were even written by other authors. The first English version of Galland, referred to as the "Grub Street" edition, was a pirated edition called *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* and appeared around 1706, although several other publishers throughout England and Europe subsequently reprinted it over the century.

The fluidity of Galland's work, its relative "unfaithfulness" to any original, and the unscientific and non-anthropologically focused quality of its fiction, as well as a distinct lack of paratextual amendments, however, were not things that seemed to have been problematic for 18th century European scholars, critics, or readers of fiction, despite later critiques by academics demanding to unravel the *Nights'* tangled textual history. Galland and his publisher also edited the G-manuscript's sexuality, excised its poetry completely, and took out anything his "readers might find excessively exotic"⁹⁹ - actually downplaying the work's cultural identity, as well as added scores of stories never found in the G-manuscript. He also capitalized on the popularity of folk and fairy tales in France by emphasizing the fantastic aspects of the *Nights*. "Readers who consumed volumes of Galland's work as if they were *petites pastisseries* did so with the comforting notion that they were perusing *contes* largely removed only in setting from their indigenous folklore."¹⁰⁰ Thus Galland, and his anonymous Grub Street translator, in their translations, rewritings, additions and emendations, transformed the *Nights* into an 18th century European-centered fairytale collection with a minor, almost non-existent, cultural setting. Galland and Grub Street were a couple of texts whose "Middle Eastern" elements were deliberately diminished or erased, and ones with their own very distinctive

and individual fictional characteristics. One cannot approach Galland and *Grub Street*, or study them and their influences, in the same manner as later Orientalized versions, because they were very different works.¹⁰¹

Still, later scholars complained about Galland's translation, suggesting that the author's contribution to the legacy of the *Nights* was in fact an obscuration of what the *Nights* was, which indeed it was in part, and yet it was also its own "*Nuits*" itself, operating in a very idiosyncratic framework which would forever change the trajectory and history of the *Nights*. In 1994, Muhsin Mahdi, who spent over a decade redacting Arabic *Nights*' manuscripts, expressed his frustration at all of the versions of the *Nights*, and their receptions, that he considered unfaithful to his vision of an original urtext, with a particular critical focus on Galland. "Generations of scholars had to labor,"¹⁰² he writes, just to get to the point he found himself at, in order to figure out a semblance of an "original" *Nights* and what it might have looked like. This frustrating quest for the original, that only developed in earnest in the 19th century, and continues in large part today, is indicative of the 19th century paratextually-based notions of the *Nights* as an actual scientifically accurate, anthropologically "Middle Eastern," physically stable text. During the 18th century, however, notions of strict faithfulness, particularly in translations, were not given much thought, in general. The book was not a collection of cultural knowledge, or a static discernable work with a clear origin, but rather a series of fantastic stories that just happened to have a possible, but uncertain, Middle Eastern genesis. Its birthplace and origins, even its title, author or publisher, were of a secondary concern, if considered at all, to the fictions in its pages.

Later versions of the *Nights*, and research on the story collection, expressed clear frustration with the 18th century's inadequately defined origins. The stories, while popular, would become a source of intense scrutiny and provoke an endless and largely fruitless search for original manuscripts of the collection by 19th century European Orientalists, scholars and authors and, more recently, by 20th and 21st century US and Middle Eastern based academics. Edward Lane, whose own English translation of the *Nights* began appearing in 1838 situates himself within this problem of the incomplete nature and obscure origins of the book, as does Burton and most every other later scholar or translator of the *Nights*, by responding to its incompleteness by suggesting their versions are, finally, a "complete" one. *The Edinburgh Review*, one of the most reputable literary journals in England during the 19th century, wrote, in 1886, that Galland's version was "a very charming and interesting introduction" to the *Nights* "but it was neither complete nor accurate,"¹⁰³ showcasing in part the paratextual stirrings of this insistence on an original and a faithful reproduction of it. During the 18th century this issue was rarely brought up in writings about the *Nights*. The 18th century version was first and foremost a fantastical piece of literature whose ultimate origins or originality was rarely an issue. This disregard for its specific historical origins, and lack of related paratextual influences, played important roles in presenting the 18th century *Nights* not as an authoritative text on the practices of foreign people but rather as a poetic, fictional and fantastical story collection.

The 1706 anonymous English translation of Galland's *Nights*, dubbed the "Grub Street" edition - because its origins were within the famous London Street's literary quarters and no author or translator has ever been discovered - added to the general

attitude toward, not only the *Nights* and its origins, but also the business of literature in general, during the 18th century. For the most part people were unconcerned with the work's origins, whether it was pirated or not, or who even the author was, none of these issues were raised at any significant level during the 18th century in England. In fact, no significant copyright law existed in England in 1706, particularly with publications of fiction. The first major copyright law regarding individual authors, known as the Statute of Anne after Queen Anne, was passed in 1710, and serious and widespread application of copyright laws, especially regarding fiction, would not take place in the country for decades.¹⁰⁴ Instead, publishers rushed to sell new, often pirated or derivative, copies of this popular work. The Grub Street title was *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* and its popularity can be seen in part in these scores of volumes that were printed and republished and pirated every year during the 18th century. The preface to many copies of the Grub Street version, also evidence of a paratextual nature insisting on the romantic obscurity of the work, gives a brief introduction to the stories and their anonymous origins. One version begins: "We know not the name of the Author of so great a Work; but probably it is not all done by one Hand." The stories contained within it are called "pleasant and diverting, because of the Wonders they usually contain."¹⁰⁵ Its stated, paratextual goal was to be a storehouse of fantastic stories of uncertain origin.

Interestingly the Preface also outlines some of the origins of the work as an anthropological resource "because of the Account they give of the Customs and Manners of the Eastern Nations, and of the Ceremonies of their Religion, as well Pagan as Mahometan, which are better described here, than in any Author that has wrote of them, or in the Relations of Travellers."¹⁰⁶ The book also suggests that it is a comprehensive

overview of large portions of Asia, covering “All the Eastern Nations, *Persians, Tartars,* and *Indians*.”¹⁰⁷ And yet despite this long paratextual list of anthropologically related elements promised within, the reception, and contents of the Grub Street *Nights*, as an anthropological source text, did not seem to resonate much at all, or as popularly, as the story collection’s tales of fantasy, suspense and romance. In any event this paratext promises not only an overview of the Middle East, but almost of every country, region and religion East of Europe, comprising of an unattainable diversity of voices.

The reception of the 18th century *Nights* and how it was seen can be generally discerned as the work of fantasy and fiction it was though a variety of notable receptions. The *Adventurer*, a well-known journal of literary criticism edited by John Hawkesworth featuring significant contributions by Samuel Johnson, among other well-known English writers, uses the *Nights* to refer to what is best found in literature. In 1777 an anonymous reviewer writes “The most extravagant, and yet perhaps the most generally pleasing of all literary performances, are those in which supernatural events are every moment produced by genii and fairies; such are the Arabian nights entertainmenz [sic],”¹⁰⁸ clearly defining what the *Nights* generally is seen as – a collection of fantasy stories. In 1774, John Aikin, a noteworthy 18th century English writer, editor, and medical doctor, writing with his sister, the 18th century English poet Anna Laetitia Aikin (she would later take the name of her husband “Barbauld”), reference the *Nights* in a chapter devoted to a literary analysis of horror: “In the *Arabian nights* are many most striking examples of the terrible joined with the marvellous: the story of Aladdin and the travels of Sinbad are particularly excellent,”¹⁰⁹ further situating the stories of the *Nights* into a distinctly fantastical realm rather than one of truths. *Joseph Andrews*, published in 1742 and written by Henry

Fielding, one of the first English novels and an integral part of the English literary canon, also outlines the general notion of the *Nights* as a work of fiction. Fielding lists a number of works, including “the *Arabian nights*,” which “record persons who never were, or will be, and facts which never did nor possibly can happen.”¹¹⁰

This understanding, and defining feature, of the *Nights* as fantastic literature continued from the late 18th century into the early part of the 19th century, and the certainty of this definition can be seen in how 18th century versions of the *Nights* interacted intertextually with some of England’s most well known Romantic poets. In one of the first books of English literary criticism dealing with the relationship between the Middle East and England, 1908’s *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, Martha Pike Conant writes “The history of the oriental tale in England in the eighteenth century might be called an episode in the development of English Romanticism.”¹¹¹ Indeed many English writers of the 18th and even of the early part of the 19th centuries spoke of the *Nights*, in particular, as being a source of inspiration, especially in terms of its fantastic and ethereal qualities. It is likely, in part, to have even been an important source for the Romantic English Poets’ notions of what literature and poetry was. In the *Biographia Literaria* (1817) Samuel Taylor Coleridge outlines his early inspirations about literature. “I found the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments,” he writes of them, and they fascinated the young boy to such an extent that he was “haunted by spectres”¹¹² during the night as he watched the book on his windowsill waiting for the sun to rise so he could read it once again. “My father found out the effect which these books had produced, and burned them.”¹¹³ Upon reading the *Nights*, Coleridge is inspired to physically become a semblance of an artist: “So I became a dreamer – and

acquired an indisposition to all bodily activity – and I was fretful, and inordinately passionate, and as I could not play at any thing, and was slothful.”¹¹⁴ The danger inherent in, and the inspiration coming from, Coleridge’s copy of the *Nights* had nothing to do with its information on the “East,” and seemed much more to do with the stories’ ability to enchant, with fantasy, their reminiscing reader. The specific version of the *Nights* Coleridge would have had as a child in the 18th century would have to be either Galland’s, the Grub Street edition, or a direct edited, derived or pirated version of one of the two. There were no other major versions before 1800.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s poem “Recollections Of The Arabian Nights” (1830) also speaks to the nature of the *Nights* as being one of enchantment rather than anthropology. Although it was written in the 19th century, it reflects the general sense of the 18th century *Nights*, and was written before Lane’s 1838 version, which seemed to forever situate the *Nights* into an Orientalist framework. Tennyson, actually, makes a great case for the argument outlined in this chapter, acting as a bridge between the romance of the 18th century *Nights* and the science and anthropology of the 19th century. Margaret Annan notes that after Tennyson wrote and published this poem, he read Lane’s *Nights*, and wanted to change some details that suddenly were not as “true” as they could be. He had the word “sofa” in his original, for example, “and although he did not then change the line which spoke of the ‘broidered sofas,’ he appended an apologetic note to the poem, explaining his inaccurate use of the word.”¹¹⁵ His concern highlights the changing nature of the *Nights*, and yet his poem remains as an example of a romanticized *Nights*. While Tennyson does incorporate the backdrop of geography and religion in his poem - “Adown the Tigris I was borne, / By Bagdat’s shrines of fretted gold, / High-

walled gardens green and old; / True Mussulman was I”¹¹⁶ - most of the poem is situated firmly in an ethereal vision of unattainable romantic love in a fictional world of the artist’s imagination. The poem is set in a natural landscape imbued with fantastic elements that characterize it as a whole: “Still onward; and the clear canal / Is rounded to as clear a lake. / From the green rivage many a fall / Of diamond rillets musical, / Thro’ little crystal arches low / Down from the central fountain’s flow / Fall’n silver-chiming, seemed to shake / The sparkling flints beneath the prow,”¹¹⁷ and dreamily describes the *Nights* as a fictional setting of sensual nature. The narrator travels in a boat through an unkempt natural scene, akin to the author reading the *Nights*, which he describes with fantastical and magical language. “In sleep I sank / In cool soft turf upon the bank, / Entranced with that place and time.”¹¹⁸ It is a vision of the *Nights* as being a dreamscape rather than an actual place and although the landscape is seemingly situated in the “real” of the Abbasid Caliphate of Haroun Al-Rashid, it is decidedly a place that no longer exists to the writer, one to be conjured up only via fantastic poetry.

Another compelling piece of evidence for this chapter’s argument comes in a short aside by 18th century philosopher James Beattie in his 1777 “An essay on the nature and immutability of truth, in opposition to sophistry and scepticism.” Beattie was a prominent Scottish scholar, professor of philosophy, and poet. The mention is in a response to the notion by George Berkeley that the world is made of ideas rather than materialisms, an idea Beattie used to ascribe to, but later found ludicrous, joining others who “treated it as most contemptible jargon.”¹¹⁹ Beattie suggests that he might as well believe that the stories in the *Nights* are true. “In a word, if this author had asserted, that I and all mankind acknowledge and believe the *Arabian Nights Entertainment* to be a true

history, I could not have had any better reason for contradicting that assertion, than I have for contradicting”¹²⁰ what Berkeley said was plausible. Compare this quote, written in 1777, with a mention of the *Nights* by John Pickering in the 19th century, in 1843, at the first meeting of the American Oriental Society (AOS), still today one of the longest running organizations in the US dedicated to the study of the Middle East. Pickering, a longtime president and a founding member of the AOS, speaking about tales from the Persian *Hyat-ul-Kuloob*, said that even “if historically they are even not more true than the Arabian Nights, they doubtless give us the peculiar traits of the *Oriental* mind and character, with as much truth as all acknowledge to be the case in the celebrated work of fiction just mentioned.”¹²¹ Pickering clearly suggests that the *Nights*, and *Hyat-ul-Kuloob*, both contain anthropological truths, despite their fictional frameworks. Beattie uses the *Nights* as a “given” to suggest that it clearly contains only fantasies. The two quotes highlight the incredibly different responses to the *Nights* that Europe and the US, in general, had. One story collection, that of the 18th century is obviously full of fantastic fictions, while the other, the 19th century, while fictional, is obviously full of anthropological truths. It is as if the authors are writing about two completely different works.

The paratextual presentation of the *Nights* of the 18th century did seem to have some effect on defining what the *Nights* was. The lack of a clear author, no certain origin, unfaithfulness to any source manuscripts, improbable proclamations in their prefaces, changing titles, and the generally non-geographic nature of their stories all combined as important paratextual presentations for these 18th century versions of the

Nights. And as shown, it can be seen in the ways the work was received, written about, and how it influenced other writers.

“Not only is Galland’s version in no true sense a translation, but it is not the ‘Arabian Nights’ as we now understand the book.”¹²² A major shift in the perception of the *Nights* occurred in the mid-19th century with the translation by English Orientalist Edward W. Lane, called *The Thousand and One Nights, or Arabian Nights Entertainments*, published between 1838 and 1840 and a later version by Richard F. Burton, published between 1885-1888, largely due to paratextual additions. While the Grub Street translation had, in its preface, suggested that the work would portray the customs of the East, it wasn’t until Lane’s version that the topic seemed to be undertaken with such a marked seriousness by the translator. Lane included in his translation extensive paratextual notes on Middle Eastern customs that he thought would enhance the stories. He also went so far as to deliberately resituate the fantastic elements away from fiction and into truths of the “Orient,” writing in his introduction “that the most extravagant relations in this work are not in general regarded, even by the educated classes of that people, as of an incredible nature,” because they live “in a land where genii are still firmly believed to obey the summons of the magician or the owner of a talisman, and to act in occurrences of every day.”¹²³ This preface, something Genette calls the “original preface” functions distinctly here, and later in Burton, both “to ensure that the text is read properly,”¹²⁴ and “to provide the author’s interpretation of the text.”¹²⁵ Lane’s paratextual interpretation that the *Nights* are actually not fantasy but reality began a long tradition of couching the *Nights* in this new truthful guise. In his introduction he repositions the fantasy of the genii into the very real, dispelling their

fictional qualities and insisting on a more serious reading of the *Nights*, something he does throughout his translation.

Lane's endnotes throughout his text are of a similar nature, seeking to dispel the misunderstood fantastic as instead the truth of another culture. Lane's notes were even later compiled and published separately from his *Nights* as *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages: Studies from The Thousand and One Nights*, an interesting example of a paratext becoming itself a primary text. His notes sought to instill in the *Nights* something that wasn't evidently there: an overview of Arabic and Muslim customs. His first note, for example, is a several-pages-long introduction to Islam, based only on the fact that the Arabic *Nights* he translated from contained the traditional Muslim introduction typically (and paratextually) prefaced to any work published by a Muslim publisher. The stories, however, bear little resemblance to any clearly Islamic agenda, and yet Lane demands that they do. The introduction, Lane writes, "suggests to me the necessity of inserting a brief prefatory notice of the fundamental points"¹²⁶ of Islam. This insertion, of which there are many similar ones, clearly relates the text of the *Nights* to Islam, and as such constitutes an integral part of the text's identity. Genette calls this type of note "a local detour or a momentary fork in the text, and as such it belongs to the text," and explains that the authorial note "extends, ramifies, and modulates rather than comments on"¹²⁷ the text. Clearly that is what is happening in Lane's text, he found Islam a "necessity" of the *Nights*, even though most *Nights* stories have little to do with the religion. *The Edinburgh Review*, reflecting on Lane's particular contribution to the anthropological understanding of the Middle East, wrote, "the picture of Eastern society there displayed was a priceless addition to the work."¹²⁸ Lane was also generally seen in England and

Europe as somewhat of an expert on the Middle East due to his travels and residence in Egypt and his earlier book *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (1836), and this authorial aura added to the paratextual context of his *Nights*.

The 19th century was a time of a political refocusing on the Middle Eastern region by Europe and the US, with an eye toward economic growth and more European, particularly English, regional political and colonial power, and the development of major funding of, and focused academic interest in, the Middle Eastern region. This was largely due to the impending breakup of Ottoman hegemony in the area that began in the early 19th century,¹²⁹ coupled with greater economic and military strengths of England and the US. An entire industry of Oriental studies societies opened their first branches during the 19th century. The Asiatic Society of the British Raj was established at the end of the 18th century in Calcutta in 1784, however it presciently forecast similar societies throughout Europe and the US over the following decade. The American Oriental Society was founded in 1842, The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland in 1824, The Deutsche Morgenlandische Gesellschaft (German Oriental Society) in 1845, The Royal Geographical Society (which funded several Middle Eastern expeditions, and studies, including most of Richard F. Burton's notable travels) in England in 1830, and the Société asiatique in France in 1822. Despite the long and engaged relationship that Europe had with the Middle East, it wasn't until the 19th century that the development of a serious anthropological and more scientific based focus began to develop. The change in the focus of 19th century versions of the *Nights*, and responses to these newly reformed works, mirrored this sudden growth of European and US academic interest in the Middle East, which likely also played a role in the re-presentation of the *Nights*.

The authority of Lane's version of the *Nights* and its paratextual focus on anthropologically sound elements can be seen throughout essays and references to it following its publication. In the 1852 article "History of Coffee," John Crawford draws on Lane's notes from the *Nights*, referring to Lane and his *Nights* three times and using the references as truths to back up Crawford's overview of the global coffee market. Crawford suggests that the increased use of tobacco and coffee "have conducted to the promotion of sobriety among the Mahomedan nations of Western Asia."¹³⁰ Crawford draws on this and other "facts" to create his historical account of coffee from Lane's "learned and judicious notes to his translation of the Arabian Nights."¹³¹ The article argues for the further study of coffee as a potential English trading product, giving an overview of coffee's popularity and statistical information on how coffee is traded worldwide. At one point Crawford makes the demand for "moderate and equable duties"¹³² to be imposed on the coffee trade. This article, published in the (later Royally-mandated) *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, is steeped in colonial and business opportunities, making a clear call for using something like the *Nights*, and its paratextual additions, as a real and factual work containing potential business and colonial opportunities for England, something which did not exist for the 18th century *Nights*.

The essay "On the History and Migration of Cultivated Narcotic Plants in Reference to Ethnology," by J. Crawford, and published in the *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* in 1869, the journal of the Ethnological Society of London, also mentions the *Nights* in its scientific study of plants. The Ethnological Society of London, unlike the Statistical Society, was liberal in its editorials and articles,

and Crawford also uses Lane, not to reveal potential colonial enterprises, but rather to outline how colonialism was influencing the behaviors of indigenous populations.

Crawford writes that tobacco was introduced to Africa and Asia by Europeans, using Lane as his evidence. “According to Mr. Lane, the modern translator of *The Arabian Nights*, the plant was introduced into Turkey, Arabia, and Persia, about the beginning of the seventeenth century.”¹³³ Crawford also uses Lane as evidence for hemp use in the Arabic world, citing *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*,¹³⁴ and another famous literary figure, Samuel Johnson as an authority as well, who wrote about the drug betel. In another essay in the same journal, Crawford also writes about the plant sesame, and how that the plant’s French, and later English name “sesame,” came directly from the pages of Galland’s *Nights*, via the story “Ali Baba.” “The French name, *sesame*, evidently taken from the translation of *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainments*, furnished the European form of the word, the genuine one being *samsam*.”¹³⁵ As an aside this is an interesting observation by Crawford, which suggests that the etymology of the word “sesame” has its origins in a story (“Ali Baba”) which itself has very uncertain origins, and may have been invented entirely by Galland, and/or Hanna Diab. The fictional word, in turn, became a factual word, both in French and English, and one of the words today most generally associated with the *Nights*. Regardless, what these three prominent essays suggest is that the paratextual additions of the *Nights*, particularly Lane’s notes in his *Nights*, were indeed seen as a storehouse of factual information about cultures, practices and even biology, things the 18th century *Nights* would never have contained.

Lane’s authority as an ethnographer and anthropologist, as well as author, was firmly established in his *Nights*, “imbued with the spirit of the East and rich in illustrative

comment.”¹³⁶ In his version, however, Lane also outlined several passages that he cut out of the Arabic version of the *Nights* he translated from, due to their potentially controversial nature, and the author also admitted to culling other stories in order to keep his version short. Richard F. Burton’s English translation, which first appeared in 1885, set itself up almost deliberately against Lane, against Lane’s use of ethnological or factual information, which Burton found lacking and under-defined, but also rather mostly against Lane’s censorious nature. Lane’s *Nights*, Burton critiques, “does not score a success”¹³⁷ for many reasons, as Burton outlines in his paratextual preface. Lane chose the “wrong” (Burton says it is too short) Arabic copy (the “Bulaq” edition) to translate from. In addition, according to Burton, Lane garbles the poetry of the original, did not know enough Arabic, or enough about Middle Eastern culture, to really understand the *Nights*, and changed the format of the original. Perhaps worst of all to Burton, however, was that Lane “was compelled to avoid the ‘objectionable’ and aught ‘approaching to licentiousness.’”¹³⁸ Burton takes the task of retranslating the *Nights*, adding additional ethnographic notes, mainly about sexual practices, and retranslating and adding “objectionable” material, especially in his additional anthropological notes. Burton’s paratextual response was largely a response to Lane’s paratextual additions, if Lane had not included any further information in the form of his introduction and extensive footnotes the works, both of Lane and Burton, would have been entirely different texts, if they could have existed without these paratexts at all.

Burton published his *Nights* privately, in large part to avoid the censors, from 1885-1888. Burton, at the time, was posted to an English consular position at Trieste. It was near the end of his life (he died in 1890), and his fame as an author and traveler, as

well as a controversial figure, was well known throughout the United Kingdom: as an African explorer (most famously searching for the source of the Nile river with John Speke), as the Westerner who traveled to Mecca and Medina disguised as a Muslim pilgrim, and as the author of scores of books on the world, about places he had traveled to and worked in, including Africa, India, the United States and South America. Like Lane, this authorial history and persona fits under paratext as well, and certainly played a role in Burton's authority as anthropologist for people looking toward his *Nights*. Despite the extensive number of books he produced, it wasn't until his *Nights* that Burton became wealthy from his writing, and he quickly sold out of his first 1,000 copies only to produce more throughout the short rest of his life.

The anticipation for Burton's edition, before it was published, was firmly based on Burton's paratextual reputation for bringing controversy wherever he went, but also on his authority as an anthropologist. The coupling of Burton's notoriety with the *Nights* as an anthropological textbook added to the text's newly developing, ever evolving and changing, sense of itself. A passage from *The Critic*, a major late 19th century literary compendium of US and English literary news, remarked, in 1884, that Burton's *Nights* would be of "great interest to everybody who cares for Oriental habits of thought and language."¹³⁹ In another interview from the *Pall Mall Gazette* and reprinted in *The Critic*, Burton cautions readers to approach his *Nights* as one would approach understanding a different culture, advising that "we must remember that grossness and indecency are matter of time and place; what is offensive in England is not so in Egypt; what scandalizes us now would have been a tame joke."¹⁴⁰ What was promised, and what was anticipated, from these few but reputedly associated quotes, was a work of

literature that would be anthropologically illuminating, if a bit risqué as well – both features were expected from someone like Burton, a notorious, but respected global explorer and also scandalous figure for, in part, having published a translation of the *Kama Sutra* in 1883, and for focusing on ethnographic sexuality in much of his other writings. Burton's *Nights* were also anticipated as being “new,” in the sense that they were finally the whole *Nights*, as represented by their Arabic originals, and not filtered through the staid Victorian mores of European translators. The point of his version, as he says, “is to show what ‘The Thousand Nights and a Night’ really is...by writing as the Arab would have written in English.”¹⁴¹ This focus, by Burton, but also by Lane, on the authentic, on the legitimate, was something that was entirely missing from Grub Street or Galland.

Burton's authority on the Middle East was firmly established by the time his *Nights* were published. He had spent months masquerading as an Egyptian doctor in a neighborhood of Cairo, learning more Arabic and customs of the people of the city, in order to be able to travel to Mecca disguised as a Muslim pilgrim, under the funding of the English Royal Geographic Society, and in order to scout Arabia for the English. His trip was documented in *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Medinah and Meccah*, published in 1855. His efforts and interests, however, drew criticism from back home that would plague him his whole life. Some people thought his masquerading had gone too far. An 1856 review of Burton's book *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* in the *Edinburgh Review* disdainfully portrays Burton and his pilgrimage: “There is something indescribably revolting to our feelings, in the position of an English officer, even though it be in the pursuit of very interesting and desirable

information, crawling among a crowd of unbelievers, around the objects of their wretched superstition...and in a word, accommodating himself – not alone passively and by negative participation, but by acts, by words, and even by the simulation of devotional feeling.”¹⁴² The article further suggests that if there was anything positive to be had from the experience, Burton was a tremendous success in his guise, but clearly is critical and fearful of Burton’s quest for authenticity. A lengthy 1890 obituary in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society* outlines the explorer’s authority on the Middle East further, “He was, as we have seen, a consummate linguist, and unsurpassed in his knowledge of Arabic literature and traditions, and in sympathy with oriental thought.”¹⁴³ Who Richard Burton was, not only in terms of his scandalous nature but also, like Lane, for his authority as anthropologist of the Middle East, played a strong role in the reception of his *Nights* and on the perception of the *Nights* as an ethnographic true portrayal of the Middle East and, now to a lesser extent, as a fiction. Who Galland was, on the other hand, as a reputable Orientalist, played little into how his 18th century version was received, largely perhaps due to the absence of any major paratextual additions by Galland suggesting that his work was a truthful representation of the Orient.

Burton’s paratextual declarations about his intent with his translation also seemed to influence some of the reception surrounding it. In a letter from 1881, printed in *The Athenaeum*, a notable 19th and 20th century English literary journal, Burton outlines his forthcoming *Nights* as being a “study of anthropology” and useful because it would be “a marvelous picture of Oriental life.”¹⁴⁴ Notes from a dinner Burton was present at, in *The Academy*, a well known 19th century English journal, which printed news about literature, science and art, in 1885, suggest that the new version “literal and idiomatic, is derived

from a laborious collation of the existing printed texts (all faulty) and several MSS.”¹⁴⁵ Burton spent time poring over manuscripts and even attempted to track down Arabic originals not found in Galland, and when he couldn’t, he translated Hindi translations of Galland into Arabic and then back into English, according to a letter he wrote, published in *The Academy* in 1886.¹⁴⁶ His desperate seeming attempts for authenticity’s sake led him to believe that an authentic, definitively “Middle Eastern,” *Nights*, something which had never been seen before, was what the *Nights* both was and needed to be showcased as. Such concerns were notably absent from Galland, a fastidious scholar whose more serious works, such as the *Bibliothèque orientale* (which Galland took over after Barthelemy d’Herbelot – a distinguished 17th century French Orientalist and later secretary for the King of France - died, and eventually published in 1697) were respected in academic communities throughout France and Europe. The *Bibliothèque* was a compendium of cultural knowledge that generally was looked to in Europe for truthful information about the region. Galland’s *Nuits*, however, were not seen as serious encyclopedias of the East as the 19th century *Nights* were. Burton, for his part, seemed to take the *Nights* and insert his own version of the *Bibliothèque* into it.

Some reception of Burton’s *Nights* was mixed, but very little of it seemed to be neutral. Burton’s notes and additional essays on “pederasty,” his theories on what he termed to be the “Sotadic” zone (a region of the world he claimed to be geographically inclined toward pederasty and gay identity)¹⁴⁷, his footnotes on female circumcision, lengthy explanations and definitions of different words in Arabic for sexual organs, reflections on race and its relationship to how a person behaved, particularly sexually, all were a far cry from Lane’s relatively benign-seeming additions on customs of the

Egyptians. Dane Kennedy's book *The Highly Civilized Man* gives several examples of poor 19th century reviews that Burton's *Nights* received: it was called "morally filthy" and a "part of the garbage of the brothel," and "one of the grossest books in the English language."¹⁴⁸ Stanley Lane-Poole, nephew of Edward Lane, critiqued Burton's *Nights* as "an appalling collection of degrading customs and statistics of vice."¹⁴⁹ Lane-Poole's comments, while degrading, also highlighted the notion that what Burton wrote about was essentially true, but it was just something that decent people didn't openly examine.

Several published jokes from the late 19th century also emphasize Burton's scandalous influence. An article on good books for boys to read in *Littell's Living Age*, a 19th century literary journal from Boston which lasted for a hundred years, suggested that the *Arabian Nights* should be a part of "a boy's library, though he is not required to read it in Captain Burton's translation."¹⁵⁰ Another note in a "jokes" column from *Life* magazine in 1887 says, "The Queen has graciously condescended to accept a copy of the Arabian Nights from Lady Burton. Gracious, what condescension!"¹⁵¹ An 1886 satirical note in *Puck*, a highly respected political satirical journal in the US, which also published in London, writes "A free fight occurred in the vestry of one of our churches the other night. A copy of Burton's edition of the 'Arabian Nights' got into the Sunday-school library, and each of the four deacons wanted to take it home first."¹⁵² The notion of an ethnographic investigation imbedded within fictional tales of highly erotic nature "translated" by the scandalous figure of Richard Burton was apparent throughout these quotes, Burton's *Nights* were Burton's, but they also added to the ways in which the *Nights* were generally seen in Europe and the US in the late 19th century.

Sales of Burton's *Nights* suggested their popularity and he also received several positive reviews, most of which focused on the anthropological legitimacy of his work. *The Academy*, writing in 1887, following the 10th - and what was assumed to be the last - volume of Burton's *Nights*' publication, asks, "Who shall say that he has not fulfilled his promise of putting before Orientalists and other students a manual of the inner life of the East, vivified by his own genius, learning, and plainness of speech?"¹⁵³ A review in *The Critic* from 1887 writes that Burton "has not diminished [Galland and the *Nights*] but brought [it] into greater prominence than ever."¹⁵⁴ *Vanity Fair*, one of the UK's most popular magazines in the 19th century, called Burton's translation "perfect," and praised him, in a review published in 1886, for being both a "bold astute traveller," and "a Master of Oriental languages, manners, and customs."¹⁵⁵ A later edition of Burton's volumes also lists several responses to the *Nights* in its section on notes and additions. The *Morning Advertiser* calls the work "priceless" and important in "marking an era in the annals of Oriental translation,"¹⁵⁶ *The Bat* called his work a "gigantic service to all students of literature who are not profound Orientalists,"¹⁵⁷ and *The Lincoln Gazette* says that it "offers a complete picture of Eastern peoples" but warns potential readers that they "must be prepared to find that the manners of Arabs and Moslems differ"¹⁵⁸ from their own.

Burton's reviews and reactions collectively seemed to center on his paratextual ethnographic and anthropologically interesting - and factual - additions rather than much, if any, on the text's literary qualities. In the late 19th century the perception of what the *Nights* was, apart from even Burton and Lane, and what it could be, had dramatically changed and references to it elsewhere shifted as well. An anthropological article on

Gypsies in Egypt, written by Alfred von Kremer, a notable 19th century Austrian Orientalist and politician who spent a good part of his career in the Middle East, writes about gypsy fortune tellers “seen sitting on the roadsides prophesying from cards or sand. Prophesying from sand, called *Ilm er raml* is very old in the east and must be known to the reader of the *Arabian Nights*.”¹⁵⁹ A 1903 fourth grade teacher’s course plan from *The Elementary School Teacher and Course of Study*, a well-known University of Chicago educational journal catering to the development of progressive education in the US, includes a teaching plan containing stories from the *Nights* that “will give an idea of the luxury of oriental life.”¹⁶⁰ A 1930 article on the history of incense use by Duke University Old Testament Scholar Allen Howard Godbey writes that “The reader of the *Arabian Nights* may recall that in some tales spirits of *jann* arise in the smoke of powders thrown on the fire”¹⁶¹ and then goes on to quote Lane as a source for other related ethnic practices. The *Nights*, and primarily the influence of their added paratextual elements toward the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, had become a source text for scientific, anthropological, and cultural inquiry into the Arab world. It was no longer the *Nights* of the 18th century.

The unusual paratextual additions in Burton and Lane, beginning with both authors’ personas and their respected histories as explorers, but also with the translators’ uses and incorporations of extensive introductions, footnotes explaining Islamic and Arabic practices, other added essays, and reviews and marketing related writing in journals all seemed to conspire to overshadow the text itself. People believed that the *Nights* was now this Orientalist book of truth, largely due to the paratext instead of the text. This new definition of the *Nights* would seem to forever haunt notions of what the

story collection was, and obscure and redefine the *Nights* of the 18th century as works that they clearly were not.

In 1908 Martha Pike Conant wrote one of the first academic studies on Orientalism in English literature, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, which focused exclusively on literature from the 18th century and spent a good deal of time on the *Nights*. Because it was the *Nights* of the 18th century, her book should have focused on the fantastical nature of the *Nights*, but instead she insists that it is an example of Orientalism in English literature. Besides mentioning Galland in an aside she also does not specify which *Nights* she bases her study on either, relying primarily on too general of a notion of the *Nights* to effectively study it. She calls the *Nights* “genuinely oriental,”¹⁶² suggesting that in the book has “a strange sense of reality in the midst of unreality,” and a “verisimilitude,”¹⁶³ a book where “despite the misty clouds of enchantment, there is substantial ground under foot.”¹⁶⁴ The evidence she provides for saying how the *Nights* of the 18th century is factual and anthropological, however, is primarily based on the fact that places in the *Nights*, like Damascus, exist in reality, but other than this she gives no comprehensive collection of evidence to suggest the 18th century *Nights* was Orientalist or related to the Middle East at all. And in fact Conant spends most of her time on the *Nights* actually writing about the work’s imaginative qualities instead of its “Oriental” ones, showing that despite trying to make the 18th century *Nights* into an Orientalist-based work the evidence is just not there to do so. Conant’s study seems to be mainly adhering to the definition created by the paratextual amendments of the 19th century *Nights* of Burton and Lane, instead of providing a historically accurate study of 18th century responses to, and versions of, the story

collection. She even mentions Burton as an authority on the *Nights* and how his examination of the *Nights* shed light on all the details of the book that need to be revealed. “It would be superfluous to describe this familiar book in detail. That ground has been well covered by such translators and essayists as Sir Richard Burton and Mr. John Payne.”¹⁶⁵ Conant’s study of the 18th century *Nights* was colored by the 19th century versions and understandings of the *Nights*, which were specific to that decade, and her failure to investigate the nuances at work in Galland and Grub Street further promoted the idea that all the *Nights* were “Oriental” first and foremost.

One of the most well researched books on the *Nights* and its interactions with the West, in particular with English literary criticism, is *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights* (1984) by Muhsin Ali (aka Muhsin al-Musawi). While the book covers an extensive amount of information and is, for the most part, very accurate in its reflections and comprehensive in its scope, Ali fails to account for some very important discrepancies in the differences between the *Nights* between the 18th and 19th centuries, even though most of the evidence he provides illuminates the argument of this chapter, particularly his evidence regarding the 19th century *Nights*. Ali’s book comes closest to explicating the clear differences between the 18th and 19th century *Nights*, however. He even writes that some people, in the 18th century, saw “the Arabian tales as a work of art, a blend of the fanciful and the realistic, rather than as an accurate representation of Oriental life and manners.”¹⁶⁶ And yet Ali, in this chapter on the 18th century *Nights* in particular, still insists that an Orientalist framework based in Europe was the primary way in which these Europeans read the

Nights in the 18th century, even though most of the evidence he provides does not suggest this much at all.

For the most part Ali does not address the concern that what is being written about when critics wrote on the *Nights* was a shifting entity. He spends most of his book on the Orientalist-related responses to the *Nights* of the 19th century, although he has one short chapter on the 18th century, referenced above. While most of the responses and receptions Ali includes in his chapter on the 18th century overall are not necessarily indicative of any Orientalism, he provides the popularity of Grub Street and Galland as evidence that Europeans during this time period were influenced, in their understandings of the Middle East, by these 18th century versions. Ali calls the 18th century anonymous writers of the *Nights* and other Eastern tales “pseudo-Orientalists who derived their meagre information from a hasty and shallow acquaintance with the East,”¹⁶⁷ and yet provides little evidence from the 18th century to make this generalized claim. Most of the evidence Ali provides in this chapter is that merely the *Nights* was popular in Europe, and mainly for its “unrestricted fancy,”¹⁶⁸ and most of his evidence comes from works in the last decade of the 18th century or even later, relying on both 19th and even 20th century critical responses to situate his notions of Orientalism. Despite this, and his exceptional overview of both realist and more romantic reactions to the 18th *Nights*, Ali continues to insist on the work’s Orientalist framework. He writes that the 18th century *Nights* was “Appreciated as a repository of information on Eastern manners, customs and modes of life,” and that the work was “Regarded as a subtle combination of the informative and the delightful,”¹⁶⁹ despite providing primarily only evidence that the reaction to the tales was one which insisted on and focused on their fictional and fantastic qualities, not their

ability to provide anthropological facts. Although he certainly comes close to dividing the *Nights* as separate entities regarding their Orientalist frameworks, Ali ultimately still insists on an Orientalist 18th century *Nights*. Certainly there was a movement toward a more anthropologically Orientalist notion of the *Nights* at work in some reactions in the 18th century, but these were largely toward the latter part of the decade, and most of Ali's scant evidence from this century is from 1780 and later, suggesting a move toward the 19th century *Nights*, but not providing enough about the earlier reactions of the 18th century to make the Orientalist claims he does.

Another clear example of scholarship misunderstanding and mistransposing the *Nights* temporally and politically, and one which highlights and argues for the argument in this chapter, can be found in Ros Ballaster's more recent *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England: 1662-1785*, published in 2005. As a caveat to this example, however, this argument does not deny Ballaster's overall claims, which make for an impressively researched background of English fiction dealing with the East during this time period, with a particularly illuminating feminist reading, but rather uses Ballaster's fairly recent book as an example of which there are many elsewhere - the scores of works featuring a generalized Orientalist-framed definition of the *Nights*, regardless of, in fact ignoring, the non-Orientalist nature of its 18th century versions.

Early in her book Ballaster gives, as an example of an English enchantment with the Middle East, a quote from Mary Hays' 1796 novel *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* in which the titular character Emma recalls her youth spent listening to tales from the East. Ballaster uses this quote as an example of an early English cultural fetishization:

When myself and my little cousins had wearied ourselves with play, their mother, to keep us quiet in an evening, while her husband wrote letters in an adjoining apartment, was accustomed to relate (for our entertainment) stories from the Arabian Nights, Turkish Tales, and other works of like marvellous import. She recited them circumstantially, and these I listened to with ever new delight: the more they excited vivid emotions, the more wonderful they were, the greater was my transport: they became my favourite amusement, and produced, in my young mind, a strong desire of learning to read the books which contained such enchanting stores of entertainment.¹⁷⁰

Ballaster interestingly situates the narrator of this tale alongside the *Nights* character Dunyazad, who, like Emma, sits under the watchful but absent gaze of a powerful male figure while listening to the stories. Ballaster uses this quote as an example of something she sees as pervasive in English literature of the time period, where “‘fiction’ is presented, in a variety of texts, as the best way of ‘knowing’ the Orient and comprehending its legacy to the West.”¹⁷¹ Very little in this quote, however, or in the novel it is taken from, seems to be related at all to anything cultural, besides the names “Arabian” and “Turkish,” which, in their use here and elsewhere in the novel, are as secondary titles meaning very much the “fantastic,” rather than having almost anything to do with the “Orient.” Ballaster’s use of this quote as an example of English understandings of the “Orient,” does not take into account the variances of the *Nights* at work in Europe, particularly, as when this novel was written, in the 18th century. This was a time period that did not generally look upon the *Nights* as a storehouse of anthropological facts but rather as a fantastical collection of fantasy stories. Emma, the narrator of the book, does not consider the *Nights* in any geographic sense, apart, perhaps, from its title, but instead sees the *Nights* as “enchanting stores of entertainment,” “wonderful,” “marvellous,” and that “they excited vivid emotions,” and more. There is

no mention of the “Orient” in this passage, apart from the titles of the works, and the character’s enthusiasm for the stories are distinctly apart from any relationship with a foreign culture.

Earlier in the novel, the book collection that the aunt and uncle drew from, and which contained a copy of the *Nights*, is described in an even more general way, less about the East and more about their fictional contents. The aunt, Mrs. Melmoth, is described as having a “great sensibility, quickness of perception, some anxiety of temper, and a refined and romantic manner of thinking, acquired from the perusal of the old romances”¹⁷² in her library. Emma also reads several other named books, such as “chapters in the Proverbs of Solomon, or verses from the French testament,”¹⁷³ “the lives of Plutarch,”¹⁷⁴ “Descartes,”¹⁷⁵ and many, many others. This novel as a whole is based on the character’s excessive, extensive and problematic literary education and not, per se, on her reflections on the Orient much at all.

Ballaster uses the *Nights* in this passage as evidence that *Memoirs* was influenced by notions of the Orient, because, it seems, of the *Nights*’ pervasive, but insufficient definition as a distinctly “Middle Eastern” or Orientalist text. This passage in *Memoirs* gives clear evidence that the *Nights* was not typically regarded as a culturally truthful book, however, but rather a fantastical story collection. While Ballaster, elsewhere in her book, notes differences in the ways in which French audiences and English audiences received the *Nights*, the differences she notes were mainly in how the two countries Orientalized the *Nights*. She still argues, overall, that the *Nights* provided “the formation of claims to moral, historical, and sociological ‘truth’ through the medium of fiction in eighteenth-century western Europe.”¹⁷⁶ Ballaster’s conclusions on the Oriental *Nights*

could not, however, come from the 18th century *Nights* of Galland or Grub Street, because these were mainly construed to be fictional fantasies, and even the mere mention of the *Nights*, in fiction, poetry or even non-fiction writing during the 18th century would have and had meant “fantasy” rather than “Orient.”

By distinguishing the changing nature of particular versions of the *Nights*, the benefit to studying the *Nights* in its historical context, and by its largely idiosyncratic nature, becomes clearer, and a clearer definition of the *Nights* not steeped in generalities, or issues about its cultural or Orientalist roots, becomes possible. By situating the character Emma Courtney’s enthusiasm for the work into the 18th century, and not the 19th or 20th century version of the *Nights*, one can understand and study more clearly how the particulars of the 18th century *Nights* were at work in the story and to the author. And these *Nights* were either of a Galland or Grub Street variety, works with a distinctly fantastical thematic tone, and not the later, more anthropologically situated *Nights* of later centuries.

Taking the *Nights* out of its cultural context could be potentially seen as de-emphasizing its roots and origins. However the authors of the 18th century fantastical romantic versions of the *Nights* themselves paratextually resituated the work away from its origins, and despite Lane’s and Burton’s resituating of the *Nights* into their Eastern connections, much criticism has been made of their “colonial” viewpoint, as will be discussed later. Burton’s *Nights*, for example, says so much more about Burton, and about Victorian England, than it does about the Arab world he is supposedly writing about. Regardless, it is important to define the *Nights* apart from a culturally situated or Orientalist-only text, particularly in its European forms, and in this manner the variety of

contextually based *Nights*, and all of their idiosyncratic influences, becomes more pronounced.

This brief study of semiotics also illuminates the benefits of studying the paratext of a text. The incredible strength of the paratextual additions of Burton and Lane, and their relative absence from Galland and Grub Street, played an almost vital role in defining what these texts were, how they were supposed to be read and understood, and what their overriding features contained. It is impossible to imagine that the editions of Burton or Lane would have had such an Orientalist framework without their paratextual amendments to the text. Burton's *Nights* were largely seen as vehicles for his somewhat obsessive interest in shocking Victorian sexual mores via Eastern sexual practices, and against Lane's paratextual pronouncement of his skill and understanding of Egypt. The notion of Burton and Lane as translators also seems insufficient, because they transformed the *Nights* instead, via their paratexts. In fact, in a larger and more general sense, it seems the idea of what a translator does should be reexamined. A translator is a paratextual figure at work with a source text or texts, but primarily involved in the recreation of those texts into a new type of text. This newly created work can more be more ably seen as "hyper-texts," continuing Genette's terminology, texts which have multiple relationships with other texts (both source texts and paratexts, for example), and not just a text with an anxious and underdeveloped relationship with some original source text. Genette mentions translation and its relationship to paratext as "undeniable."¹⁷⁷ Indeed many additions by the translators of the *Nights*, which on their surface seem like choices of appropriate diction, have instead a political, moralizing or Orientalizing agenda behind them. What is clear overall, however, is that it is disingenuous to treat the

18th century Grub Street and Galland *Nights* as if they were infused with the sort of Burtonian Orientalism that so many accuse them of having. It is also clear that the paratextual additions of Burton and Lane redefined the *Nights* and have since tainted the *Nights* in this seemingly inescapable Orientalist framework.

⁹⁴ Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

⁹⁵ Gérard Genette and Amy G. McIntosh, “The Proustian Paratexte,” *SubStance* 17, no. 2 (1988): 63.

⁹⁶ Paul Nurse, *Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World*, (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2010), 56.

⁹⁷ Genette (see n. 1), 41.

⁹⁸ Paul Nurse, 99.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁰¹ The change between Galland/Grub Street and the 19th century *Nights* has been remarked upon, but not at any great length, nor with an eye toward seriously differentiating the Oriental definition of the *Nights*. The study which most seriously does this is an unpublished PhD dissertation by Margaret Annan from 1945: Annan, Margaret Cecilia, “The Arabian Nights in Victorian Literature,” Northwestern University Library, September, 1945, see especially page 27.

¹⁰² Mahdi, *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources*, vol. 3, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 23.

¹⁰³ “The Arabian Nights,” *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal* 164 (July-October 1886): 169.

¹⁰⁴ See John Feather, “The Book Trade in Politics: The Making of the Copyright Act of 1710,” *Publishing History* 19, no. 8 (1980), for a historical overview of this Statute and an introductory bibliography.

¹⁰⁵ For reference’s sake here is one copy, of which there are scores of duplicates from a variety of publishers: *Arabian Nights Entertainments; Consisting of One Thousand and One Stories, Told by the Sultanness of the Indies, to Divert the Sultan from the Execution of a Cruel Vow*, (London: Harrison and Co., 1785), 5.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *The adventurer, in four volumes*, vol. 1, (London: B. Long and T. Pridden, 1777), 26.

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- ¹⁰⁹ John Aikin, and Anna Laetitia Aikin, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, A Fragment," *The Castle of Otranto and The Man of Feeling*, ed. Laura Mandell, (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 211.
- ¹¹⁰ Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. R. F. Brissenden, (London: Penguin, 1985), 184.
- ¹¹¹ Conant, *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), vii.
- ¹¹² Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 605-6.
- ¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 606.
- ¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁵ Annan (see n. 8), 65.
- ¹¹⁶ Baron Alfred Tennyson, "Recollections of The Arabian Nights," *The works of Tennyson*, (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 9.
- ¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹⁹ James Beattie, *An Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism*, (Edinburgh: Denham & Dick, 1805), 251.
- ¹²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹²¹ Pickering, "Address at the First Annual Meeting," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 1, no. 1 (1843): 40.
- ¹²² "Les Mille et Une Nuits. Contes Arabes, traduits par A. Galland. 1704," *The Edinburgh Review* 164, no. 335 (July 1886), 168.
- ¹²³ Lane, *The Thousand and One Nights: Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, vol. 1, (London: Charles Knight, 1841), xix.
- ¹²⁴ Genette (see n. 1), 197.
- ¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 221.
- ¹²⁶ Lane (see n. 28), 19-20.
- ¹²⁷ Genette (see n. 1), 328.
- ¹²⁸ *Edinburgh* (see n. 122), 174.
- ¹²⁹ See Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream, History of the Ottoman Empire 1300-1923*, (London: John Murray, 2005), for a historical overview of the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, and an extensive bibliography on the subject.
- ¹³⁰ Crawford, "History of Coffee," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* 15, no. 1 (April 1852): 56.
- ¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 57.
- ¹³² *Ibid.*
- ¹³³ Crawford, "On the History and Migration of Cultivated Narcotic Plants in Reference to Ethnology," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 7, (1869): 81.
- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 87-8.
- ¹³⁵ J. Crawford, "On the History and Migration of Cultivated Plants Yielding Intoxicating Potables and Oils," *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London* 7, (1869): 104.
- ¹³⁶ *Edinburgh* (see n. 6), 174.
- ¹³⁷ *Alf Layla wa Layla: The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, trans. Richard F. Burton, (USA: The Burton Club, n.d.), xi.
- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

- ¹³⁹ “Notes,” *The Critic: A Literary Weekly, Critical and Eclectic (New Series)* 2, (July-December 1884): 23.
- ¹⁴⁰ *The Critic, A Literary Weekly, Critical and Eclectic (New Series)* 4, (July-December 1885): 46.
- ¹⁴¹ Burton (see n. 36), xii.
- ¹⁴² “Art. III, Rev. of *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, by Richard F. Burton,” *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal* 104, no. 212 (October 1856): 390.
- ¹⁴³ “Obituary: Sir Richard Francis Burton, K. C. M. G.,” *Proceedings of the Royal Geographic Society and Monthly Record of Geography*, New Monthly Series, Vol. 12, No. 12. (December 1890): 762.
- ¹⁴⁴ Burton, “The Arabian Nights,” *The Athenaeum* 26, (November 1881): 703.
- ¹⁴⁵ Burton, “Notes and News,” *The Academy* 17, (October 1885): 254.
- ¹⁴⁶ Burton, “The Orientalisation of Galland’s ‘Arabian Nights,’” *The Academy* 30, no. 755 (October 23, 1886): 277.
- ¹⁴⁷ Burton does not use the word “gay” in his essay, but he does define both older man/younger boy, and same aged men relations as “pederasty.”
- ¹⁴⁸ Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 227.
- ¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, also see Lane-Poole, “The Arabian Nights,” *Edinburgh Review* 164, (July 1886): 184.
- ¹⁵⁰ “What Boys Should Read,” *Littell’s Living Age* 168, no. 2177 (March 13, 1886): 701.
- ¹⁵¹ *Life* 9, no. 218 (March 3, 1887): 118.
- ¹⁵² *Puck* 20, no. 501 (October 13, 1886): 109.
- ¹⁵³ “The Thousand Nights and a Night,” *The Academy* 31, no. 767 (January 15, 1887): 43.
- ¹⁵⁴ H. B., “London Letter,” *The Critic: a Weekly Review of Literature and the Arts* 167, (March 12, 1887): 126.
- ¹⁵⁵ *Vanity Fair*, no. 34 (October 24, 1886): 233.
- ¹⁵⁶ Burton, trans., *Supplemental Nights To The Book Of The Thousand And One Nights With Notes Anthropological and Explanatory, Volume Six*, (The Burton Club, n.d.), “Opinions of the Press,” “*Morning Advertiser*, September 15th, 1885,” 359.
- ¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, “*The Bat*, September 29th, 1885,” 360.
- ¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, “*The Lincoln Gazette*, Saturday, October 17th, 1885,” 364.
- ¹⁵⁹ Kremer, “The Gipsies in Egypt,” *The Anthropological Review* Vol. 2, (London: Trubner & Co., 1864), 264.
- ¹⁶⁰ *The Elementary School Teacher and Course of Study*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1902), 353.
- ¹⁶¹ Godbey, “Incense and Poison Ordeals in the Ancient Orient,” *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 46, no. 4 (July 1930): 219.
- ¹⁶² Conant, *The oriental tale in England in the eighteenth century*, (New York: Columbia UP, 1908), xv.
- ¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.
- ¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

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- ¹⁶⁶ Muhsin Jassim Ali, *Scheherazade in England: A Study of Nineteenth-Century English Criticism of the Arabian Nights*, (Washington DC: Three Continents Press, 1981), 29
- ¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.
- ¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.
- ¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.
- ¹⁷⁰ Ballaster, *Fabulous Orient: Fictions of the East in England 1662-1785*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 4.
- ¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ¹⁷² Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*, edited by Marilyn L. Brooks, (Orchard Park: Broadview Press, 2000), 44.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 51.
- ¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.
- ¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.
- ¹⁷⁶ Ballaster (see n. 67), 129.
- ¹⁷⁷ Genette, 405.

Pasolini's Splendid Infidelities:

Film Versions of *The Thousand and One Nights* and Their Unresolved Issues

In his essay “The Wild East: Deconstructing the Language of Genre in the Hollywood Eastern,” John Eisele groups a number of films, produced largely in the West and featuring Eastern settings or stories, into a category he calls “Hollywood Easterns.”¹⁷⁸ The essay situates its argument in a set of elements derived from cognitive linguistics and the work of John Taylor.¹⁷⁹ Taylor outlines how groupings of characteristics, called prototypes, can loosely help create linguistic meaning versus having one strict definition of a word. Eisele contends that most of the Hollywood Easterns contain many of the following set of prototypical elements: (1) Transgression, (2) Separation, (3) Abduction, (4) Reduction, (5) Induction, (6) Seduction, (7) Redemption, (8) Revelation, (9) Reaffirmation and (10) Mutilation. In addition, Eisele separates the Easterns into subgenres, based on the work of Abdelmajed Hajji, which include: “the foreign legion subtype (the ‘realist-colonialist’ type), the sheik subtype (the ‘psychological-Orientalist’ type), and the Arabian nights subtype (the ‘fantastic’ type).”¹⁸⁰ The “Arabian nights” subgenre, characterized largely by “fantasy” seems insufficient, however, because of its lack of any clear connection with the textual *Nights*. By using Eisele’s methodology in an inverted fashion, based on chapter one’s revelations about Scheherazade, however, a clear connection between the adapted films and their textual referents can be discerned.

Eisele, in a complement, suggests that Pasolini's 1974 film version of the *Nights*, *Il fiore delle mille e una notte*, is not "prototypical"¹⁸¹ of the characteristics of Hollywood Easterns. And in fact the film does not conform to standard representations of the genre as Eisele defines it. However, the *Nights* subgenre, based within the Hollywood Eastern, is not, in Eisele, or in fact anywhere at any length, defined in a sufficient manner in terms of how the films are related to the story collection *The 1001 Nights*, or each other, beyond the very general. By redefining Eisele's characteristics of the Eastern, however, and refining the *Nights*-based film genre, Pasolini's film can actually be seen to be perhaps the most prototypical *Nights* film, and may be one of the most prototypical representations of Scheherazade's ultimate G-manuscript "message" in any artistic form, apart of course from the G-manuscript itself. By particularly focusing on the notion of "transgression" and how that element comes into play when dealing with such a nebulous piece of literature as the *Nights* is, a useful framework for approaching the *Nights*, in film, or ultimately any form, is developed.

In order to proceed, a sufficient definition of "transgression" must be clearly defined, and its relationship with the *Nights* must be better understood. As Eisele defines it, the category of transgression is something that is "bad" that usually happens to, or is accused of, a heroic character. This accusation is usually unjustified. It is this transgression that spurs a large part of the plotline, and its resolution is one that typically occurs near the end of the narrative. Eisele provides an example where "the hero in the Arabian nights film is typically a thief or an outlaw who is separated from his beloved and true station in life."¹⁸² The transgression ("outlaw") is generally a false representation of the true "good" character.

To be sure, many film versions of the *Nights* contain the component of this traditionally defined notion of transgression, including the three non-Pasolini films under further consideration here. However to truly be a *Nights*-esque transgression, the thief or outlaw must be found out to be fully in the right, because the world in which he is operating is a falsely applied transgression. The truth that the transgressor of this *Nights*-film definition reveals is that manmade political, social and sexual constructs are not only constraining and limiting, but they are largely fictional - in fact the world operates by much different standards, though largely in contention with these false limitations.

There is perhaps no other piece of literature that is as physically “transgressive” as *The 1001 Nights*. Adaptations and new translations of the *Nights*, looking to past versions for reference, are immediately confronted with what amounts to perhaps the most elusive, phantom-like piece of literature in history. There is no known original manuscript or author, scores of forged, pirated and loosely translated versions. And a clear lack of scholarly understanding of the narrative art of the G-manuscript further situates the *Nights* into an obscure framework. Some versions, including the earliest Arabic manuscripts of the 19th century,¹⁸³ vary to the point of being entirely separate works only vaguely related by the common character of Scheherazade (and one of the many spellings of her name), and a narrative framing-device, and some *Nights*-related works don’t even have these. The historical background of the work is transgressive on a truly grand scale - seemingly avoiding any clearly defined physical form, textual or otherwise.

The *Nights*, particularly in the G-manuscript, is also elusive in the ultimate overall morality of the majority of its stories, most of which, including the frame story, are

infused with a sort of subversive humor. Kingdoms are won and lost by luck, chance miracles save lives, rich people fall in love with beggars, rulers are shown to be fools and tyrants with little actual power, people are deceived by the law, deceive the legal system themselves, murder without consequence, exchange lovers according to whim, are imprisoned and released for no reason, and more.¹⁸⁴ As discussed in Chapter One the *Nights* contains a sexual morality that is infused throughout all of the stories in the G-manuscript, marking it as having, despite its later more obscuring versions, one clear defining feature of its earliest narrative.

Traditional readings of Scheherazade position the storyteller as a heroic female character who tricks Shahriyar by putting off the endings of the stories as morning approaches. Shahriyar, needing to hear the end of the tale, does not kill Scheherazade, saving not only her but also the rest of the women in the kingdom. As outlined in Chapter One, this reading is insufficient, however, because not only does she finish several stories before the morning in most of the versions of the *Nights*, and does not leave other stories at any narratively-important points, but also many of her stories contain situations that would not assuage a king angry because of infidelity. It seems likely, given the nature of all of the stories in the G-manuscript, that Scheherazade is instructing him in her version of the “true” nature of the world, which operates transgressively underneath and against the artificial constructs of humanity. This sexuality in the *Nights* is not of an explicit nature either, but rather one with more of a morally suggestive message. Therefore the “transgression” that takes place in the frame story is not by Shahriyar’s first wife, but rather by Shahriyar himself, for enforcing artificial demands from his wife.

The specific *Nights* version, apart from the G-manuscript, that seems to successfully adapt the core identity of the *Nights* is Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1974 film *Il fiore delle mille e una notte* (known in English as *The Flower of the Thousand and One Nights* and also, simply, *Arabian Nights*). Despite the absence of any onscreen Scheherazade, and perhaps inadvertently, Pasolini's film is one of the most faithful rendering and clearest interpretations of Scheherazade's and the *Nights*' inherently sexual morality. Pasolini's title itself points to this insistence: the flower, the reproductive structure of a flowering plant, the natural mediator between the sexes for the continuance of life, makes an apt signifier for what Pasolini saw as the heart of the *Nights*. This "reproduction" is not only a representation of the inherently endless framing narrative structure of the *Nights* but also a portrayal of the wryly represented possibility, through its suggestive stories, of a liberation of sexuality from what Pasolini and Scheherazade see as unnatural forces of restraint.

Very little scholarship apart from Eisele's has suggested how exactly a separate genre or grouping of films based on the *Nights* can exist. It is, to be sure, extremely difficult to define what exactly makes a film a "*Nights*-film," since so many motion pictures associated with the story collection have little, if anything, to do with any clearly defined textual version. Most *Nights* -films cull general elements and plots without any reference to any text, or any previous version in any form. The 1942 Technicolor film *Arabian Nights*, for example, directly references the *Nights* in its title, has characters that are named Sinbad, Aladdin, Haroun Al-Raschid, and Scheherazade, and yet has no narrative reference to any story found in any variant of the *Nights*. Scheherazade, here, is a dancer in a circus who is fated to become queen of Persia, but who first, with fellow

performers (Sinbad, Aladdin, etc.) must help her future husband Haroun Al-Raschid win back his rightful place as ruler. Disney's 1992 *Aladdin* is another movie that would be difficult to call a *Nights* film: no framing device, no Scheherazade, and a plotline only cursorily related to the story "Aladdin," which itself has an uncertain relationship with the textual *Nights*. Because these films directly insert themselves into the *Nights*, however, due to their titles or loose associations, they must, on some level, have some relationship to Scheherazade's ultimate morality. This can be further mapped out by the new definitions of transgression vis-à-vis Eisele and their subsequent subcategories, all of which do form prototypical characteristics of *Nights* films, highlighting their clear adaptive relationships to the text, by undermining traditional notions of Eisele's categories.

Within this genre of *Nights* films, there are other slightly related films, like the 1942 *Arabian Nights*, which can be grouped under Eisele's "Hollywood Eastern" category. Perhaps this category should be renamed "*Nights-Fantasy*" films instead, however, using Eisele's criteria (fantasy) used to define his *Nights* films subgenre, due to their "Orientalized" settings and fantastic narratives. This new label can therefore include the wealth of similar non-Hollywood *Nights* films, like France's *Ali Baba et les quarante voleurs* (1954), or even worldwide television adaptations as well, such as Egypt's serial television program *Mish Alf Layla* (2010). Fantasy-*Nights* adaptations are typically big-budget productions with very basic action-adventure plots, set in exotically nondescript yet vaguely Arabian locales, featuring kitschy Orientalisms such as sabers, turbans, camels, belly dancing, swashbuckling, and harems. These Fantasy-*Nights* films can be further subdivided into adventure-centric *Nights* films, comedies and romantic-

adventure *Nights* films. In addition, a subgenre of children's films based on the *Nights* should also be included. Also importantly, the *Nights* films should be categorized by which specific stories from the textual versions of the *Nights* are included in the plot, and the degree to which they express or obscure Scheherazade's G-manuscript sexual message. All *Nights* films can fit into one or more of these categories, including *Il fiore*, which is both an adaptation of several textual *Nights* stories and ultimately a romantic-adventure story as well, with, — surprisingly, given Pasolini's reputation and politics, — major Hollywood funding.¹⁸⁵

Despite the breadth and variety of *Nights* films, there has been very little written about them as a genre detailing their relationship with the story collection, due, in large part, to the overall universal insistence of a very generalized notion of what *The 1001 Nights* is and an inability in scholarship to effectively define the story collection. Terry Staples provides an introduction to the subject in his entry “*Arabian Nights* Films,” but fails to go into much depth on how the films he lists are related to the story collection. He makes the peculiar claim that many of the stories of the *Nights* are not portrayed on film because they “would be objectionable to a modern sensibility.”¹⁸⁶ Several relevantly titled essays, including “*A Thousand and One Nights* at the Movies”¹⁸⁷ and “*The Arabian Nights* in Film Adaptations”¹⁸⁸ by Robert Irwin do little more than give a basic outline of only a few plots of some *Nights* related films, including the four under consideration here. Irwin suggests that adaptations of the *Nights* have the right to be cursorily based, if at all, on any textual version, because “very few people have ever actually read a text of the *Nights*,”¹⁸⁹ and so any unfaithfulness to a source text would never be noticed. Wen-Chin Ouyang's promisingly titled article “Metamorphoses of Scheherazade in Literature

and Film”¹⁹⁰ focuses primarily on the Hallmark made-for-TV miniseries *Arabian Nights* (2000) and its relationship to authors John Barth and Naguib Mahfouz. Although Ouyang mentions other *Nights* films, she does so briefly and without an investigation into what makes them *Nights* films. Paul Nurse’s book *Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World*¹⁹¹ (2010) has an extensive chapter on the histories of film versions of the *Nights*, alluding to the film form’s ability to continue telling Scheherazade’s tales. Michael Cooperson’s essay “The Monstrous Births of Aladdin”¹⁹² comes the closest to examining the relationship between the film versions of the *Nights* and the story “Aladdin,” but his essay provides a historical overview of several “Aladdin”-related films and their relationship with each other rather than showing how these films (and the orphan tale “Aladdin”) might fit into a *Nights*-film genre.

There are several academic essays and a few books on many of the individual *Nights* films as separate films, but again, rarely do they mention the films’ relationship with the textual *Nights*. Jack Shaheen’s annotated encyclopedia *Reel Bad Arabs*, for example, includes several *Nights* films as examples of Hollywood’s misrepresentation of the Middle East. Shaheen outlines both “good” and “bad” representations from the hundreds of reviewed films and lists the major problems as he sees them. Addressing the 1942 *Arabian Nights*, for example, he criticizes that “At times, the dialogue mocks Islam. A beggar and others say: ‘By the beard of the Prophet.’ And, ‘By the beard of Allah.’”¹⁹³ Shaheen’s book and many of the essays on the individual films, particularly the sizeable number of works specifically related to Disney’s *Aladdin*, largely focus on critiquing the Orientalist-related aspects of *Nights* films.¹⁹⁴ Other essays are typically similarly focused

on either the history of the particular film, related actors or directors, or the film's relationship with perceptions of the Middle East.

Having a genre of *Nights* films would be useful when trying to discern what something as nebulous as *The Thousand and One Nights* is, particularly in the films' relationships with any textual variant. The 1942 *Arabian Nights*, for example, could be classified as a *Nights* film in the Hollywood Eastern adventure subcategory with minimal textual overlap, except for the characters' names and its title. At this level of examination, establishing its relationship to the textual *Nights* and Scheherazade's transgressive G-manuscript morality becomes easier. The *Nights* film genre category promotes: (1) how the stories of the *Nights* are or are not represented, (2) the historical context of the film in question, (3) its reception, (4) intertextual influences, (5) how the framing tale and Scheherazade's sexual morality are presented, and other more focused questions.

The one film that is consistently mentioned as faithful to the *Nights* is Pasolini's, but only with cursory, if any, mentions of how exactly *Il fiore* is related to *The Thousand and One Nights*. In a footnote, Wen-Chin Ouyang gives a brief mention to *Il fiore*, saying that the film "does not conform to Hollywood formulae and deserves special treatment that goes beyond the concerns of this paper."¹⁹⁵ Robert Irwin says that *Il fiore* is "the best and certainly the most intelligent of *Nights* films,"¹⁹⁶ but does not explain why. Jack Shaheen is critical of Pasolini, writing that "In Pasolini's racy feature, Scheherazade spins tales about Arabia's genies, maidens, and licentious sheikhs" and "erotic princesses,"¹⁹⁷ an unusual critique given the fact that Scheherazade is not a character in the film, nor are there any notable or obvious sheikhs or princesses—

licentious, erotic, or otherwise. Shaheen's criticism seems generally based on the notion of Pasolini as a "racy" director rather than the film being problematic at all in its depiction of the Middle East, and his critique is actually a good example of the insistence on a nonsexualized *Nights*, even though the story collection's main themes are very sexual in nature.

The erotic nature of Pasolini's *Il fiore*, like Scheherazade's, operates in a distinctly undermining fashion by avoiding an overt portrayal of external meaning, relying solely on itself to function as a signification, challenging notions of order, gender, political hierarchy, and even narrative structure and meaning. Examining *Il fiore*'s ending and the film's narrative closure alongside the resolutions of three other *Nights* films - and through the lens of a new, undermining definition of Eisele's ten characteristics - highlights the usefulness of a *Nights* genre and a workable matrix of a more closely defined *Thousand and One Nights*. Despite taking a narrow look at the films' resolutions only, a similar approach to any part of the film, or any part of any *Nights* variant can be equally revealing.

The way in which the *Nights* resolves itself as a story collection is a transgression of the book form itself, because the G-manuscript is physically missing an ending volume.¹⁹⁸ Despite this, the textual *Nights* has had various interpretations on the final ending of the story collection. What seems to be resolved, according to most narrative scholarship on the *Nights*, and most translations of the *Nights*, is that Shahriyar decides, for some reason, not to murder Scheherazade. What isn't ever explained conclusively, however, is why, although several different textual versions of the *Nights* do add and embellish the reasons. Burton, for example, writes a lengthy conclusion to the story

collection in the tenth volume of his English translation in which Shahriyar sees the wrongs of his original murderous outburst and repents for having killed so many people. Husain Haddawy's 1990 translation of the Mahdi-Galland manuscript ends as many *Nights* original manuscripts end—in open unresolved ambiguity. Haddawy writes, “Translator’s Postscript: Tradition has it that in the course of time Shahrazad bore Shahrayar three children and that, having learned to trust and love her, he spared her life and kept her as his queen.”¹⁹⁹ Haddawy and Burton, however, in very *Nights*-esque fashion, are not completely finished: each author adds new additions to their own interpretations on the *Nights*, Haddawy with his *Arabian Nights II* (1995)²⁰⁰ and Burton with six additional volumes of stories following his first ten volumes. It seems that, despite the attempted insistence of these two authors and scores of others on a “resolution” to the *Nights*, there just isn't one, even at their own hands.

This lack of a resolution is further tantalizing evidence for the *Nights*' ultimate sexual morality in its physical narrative form—no clear boundaries exist, not only with the lack of an ending of the book, but with the blurred lines between the demarcations of most of its stories, and the possibility of another story, an endless cycle of reproduction, is essentially demanded. Even the stories themselves contained in the framing device contain frames of their own, leaving the reader often embedded within several layers of storytellers. This form eludes repressive elements of textual closure and leaves an open-ended subjectivity that insists on itself, despite the fact that the words of the text have ended and there are no further pages for the reader to turn. Pasolini's *Il fiore* highlights this elusive nature of the lack of a resolution while the other three films under consideration—*The Thief of Bagdad* (1940), *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), and

Aladdin (1992)—attempt, with varying degrees of achievement though largely unsuccessfully, to force a conclusive resolution.

The 1940 Alexander Korda production *The Thief of Bagdad*,²⁰¹ is a romantic adventure Fantasy-*Nights* film. *Thief* is part of a long chain of films all based on the same (largely nontextually faithful) *Nights*-related plot written by Douglas Fairbanks, noted star of the 1924 silent film version, and pulp fiction writer Alexander Romanoff under his pseudonym Achmed Abdullah.²⁰² The film contains several oblique references to some stories from various textual *Nights*, including parts of “The Fisherman and the Jinni” and “The Ebony Horse.” In addition the hero, “King Ahmad” of Baghdad, is the fictional grandson of *Nights* character (and authentic historical figure) Haroun Al-Rashid. In the movie, King Ahmad is duped by his vizier, Jaffar, and is imprisoned but escapes with the aid of Abu, a young thief. The two travel undercover to Basra to plot the restoration of Ahmad’s rule in Baghdad. Meanwhile, Jaffar has taken control of Baghdad and attempts to force the daughter of the sultan of Basra to marry him. The daughter, however, has been sheltering (and has fallen in love with) Ahmad. Through a series of adventures, and with the help of several supernatural and magical elements such as a flying horse, a bitter giant genie, a magic flying carpet, and a cult of bearded, desert-dwelling mystics, Ahmad and Abu defeat Jaffar. Ahmad and the princess of Basra marry, and peace, happiness and stability reigns, we are led to believe at the film’s end, once more in the region.

The first of a trilogy of related Sinbad films, and an example of an adventure *Nights* film, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad* (1958)²⁰³ begins with Sinbad the sailor on his way to Baghdad with his fiancée, Princess Parisa, to get married. The stated goal of their

marriage is to ensure peace and stability between the wedded couple's countries - Sinbad is from Baghdad and Parisa is from a mythical land called "Chandra." Stories included in the film from the textual *Nights* include the main character Sinbad²⁰⁴ and several cursorily related adventures, as well as the character of the generic, *Nights*-related genie in the lamp. The hero and his crew spend the majority of the film trying to regain Princess Parisa's original height (she was reduced to a height of about six inches, by the evil magician Sokurah, who is also the ruler of the genie of the lamp). After battling several giant creatures, many which also battle each other, and all of them showcasing notable Producer Ray Harryhausen's special effects, Sinbad, his crew, and the restored-to-proper-height princess sail off to their original destination with a shipload of gold and jewels pilfered from the now-defeated Sokurah. The genie, a young boy named Barani, has been granted his freedom by Sinbad and Parisa, and becomes a cabin boy on the adventurer's ship. The final sequence has the ship sailing into the distance, with Sinbad and the Princess planning their wedding.

Disney's 1992 *Aladdin*,²⁰⁵ a children's and comic romantic-adventure *Nights* film, borrows a significant number of plot elements from the 1940 *Thief of Bagdad* and, to a lesser extent, the textual "Aladdin." From *Thief*, *Aladdin* takes some major characters such as the sidekick Abu, here turned into a monkey, a strikingly similar father of the princess, including a similar turban, expansive white beard and his likeable and comic bumbling character, as well as an evil, domineering vizier named Jafar. The star of the film is "street rat" Aladdin, a homeless, young, petty thief portrayed as a likeable Robin Hood figure with a heart of gold who aspires to better himself if he could only have a chance. Aladdin falls in love with Princess Jasmine, an overly pampered and spoiled yet

despondent princess, who is being pressured by her father, the sultan, to marry. In his devious plot to marry Jasmine and inherit the kingdom, Jafar uses magic to bend the will of the sultan. Following several adventure-filled scenes, Aladdin, Abu, Jasmine, and the genie foil Jafar's plot. The film ends with Jasmine and Aladdin's marriage and the restoration of the kingdom.

All three films seem to have resolutions that end the narrative conclusively and instate an ordered and triumphant version of – importantly - monogamous, socially related sexuality consisting of a husband and wife. The film's heroes actively pursue their love interests only, and they fight and prevail over those who would take them away. In addition, all three films relate political stability to the union of the hero and heroine. They also feature several distinctly sexual threats to their heroes' quests, which the heroes overcome or avoid in order to marry their love interests. Also, and significantly, the three films end with the hero and heroine dressed in new clothing. There are also very marked moral and deliberate messages about marriage and virginity in the films: the heroine is assumed to be a virgin, and this is central to her marriageability and an important part of the political order as well.

All of these elements follow, on their surface, Eisele's traditionally defined set of ten characteristics. There is a (1) transgression, or transgressions, usually one major and several smaller ones: Ahmad's royalty is taken from him and he is cast out of his social class, the evil magician disrupts Sinbad's quest for peace, Jasmine is falsely coaxed to marry Jafar and her father is hypnotized. There are (2) separations, namely: Ahmad from his position and future wife, Sinbad from his marriage, Jasmine from Aladdin and her father. There are (3) abductions of love interests in all three films, (4) reductions of

all three to objects of possession by the evil characters in the films, (5) inductions of all three into “foreign” loves, (6) seductions of all three, (7) redemptions by the three heroes of the three films, (8) revelations that the heroes are not the bad people they seem at one point to be, a (9) reaffirmation of the state of all things under an orderly political relationship of monogamy between a man and a woman, and several (10) mutilations or threats of mutilation, and all three films situate themselves clearly into the *Nights*. When Pasolini’s *Il fiore* is placed into the context of these characteristics, however, a clear inversion takes place, and fissures in these original films become more pronounced.

Pasolini’s *Il fiore* uses stories for its narrative taken from textual versions of the *Nights*, making it very unusual for its adherence to actual textual referents. The framing device in the film is, not, however Scheherazade’s but rather from the story “Ali Shar and Zumurrud,” though Pasolini renames the hero Nur Ed Din. Nur Ed Din is a teenaged boy who in the first sequence wanders into a slave auction where men are bidding on a female slave, Zumurrud. In an unlikely turn of agency granted by her old owner, Zumurrud is allowed to choose who buys her. After criticizing several of her potential owners for being too old, and too sexually dysfunctional, she spots the youthful Nur Ed Din and chooses him, and, when she discovers he has no money to buy her, Zumurrud takes the boy into an alley and provides him with sufficient funds. The couple spend their initial domestic life together in a house Zumurrud rents for them, living off the sales of Zumurrud’s hand-woven tapestries. Despite being a slave, Zumurrud surprisingly has a lot of agency in all of the action regarding her life: who her owner is, who she sleeps with, and how she makes her money, and she is clearly, through several initial scenes, the superior of Nur Ed Din in all of these activities.²⁰⁶

In one of the couple's first scenes, the viewer is given an example of how Pasolini portrays sexuality throughout the film as a whole. Nur Ed Din is seen standing, to the right of Zumurrud in a dark room filmed in a medium shot from eye level. The neutrality of the shot, and the clear unhurried patience of the actors, suggests a sense of naturalness that is not being forced, either by the director or the characters. The boy is dressed in a thin white sheet wrapped around his waist, and his clothing mirrors the humble interiority of their room – darkly lit, a cot made out of some fraying materials, a dusty clay jug and a small fire are all that is visible. The camera shows the entire room with the two characters as minor elements in the frame. Zumurrud removes her gown, suddenly nude before Nur Ed Din. The boy looks at her shyly. Zumurrud laughs playfully, kneeling, and removes the boy's outfit, and then lies on the cot, coaxing him to mount her. The lovemaking is lighthearted, full of gentleness and giggling. Laughter and smiling are prominent features of these characters, in fact, the two elements seems to be an almost unnatural occurrence throughout the film's many stories. Here, Nur Ed Din confesses his lack of sexual experience to Zumurrud, and she tells him not to worry, she'll teach him. Because of Pasolini's insistence on using nonprofessional actors in his films, their bodies throughout the movie are realistic: not made up, transfigured, or in any way glamorized for the screen. Nur Ed Din's teeth are yellowed and gapped and his legs and backside (seen up close in the first sexual encounter) have several large moles and hairs. The sexuality throughout the rest of the film is similar—not of a pornographic or, as Shaheen says, “racy” variety, but one where a gentle mutual delight is shared between ordinary people, typically in a shy, eager and fun manner.

Il fiore's episodic "plot" is framed by the love story of Zumurrud and Nur Ed Din, who, through trickery and deception, are separated soon after the beginning of the movie. The film intersperses other tales from the *Nights* with the couple's quest to reunite. Zumurrud is kidnapped by a jealous rich man, one of the bidders she refused in the first sequence of the film. She is found by Nur Ed Din, who attempts to rescue her, but he falls asleep waiting for nightfall, and a different man kidnaps her. She is forced into sexual slavery, and threatened with rape, but escapes on horseback dressed as a man. After fleeing she arrives at a walled city in the desert where the entire populace is gathered outside the gate. A man, assuming her to also be a man, proclaims Zumurrud to be the city's next ruler, as their previous king died without an heir and this is their unique way of choosing a successor. As the king, Zumurrud makes a new policy to have frequent free banquets for everyone in and out of the city as a means of finding Nur Ed Din once again, which she eventually does. She has her guards bring him to her chambers, where Zumurrud, still in male kingly disguise, declares the boy to be the king's new gay lover. Nur Ed Din protests at first but acquiesces when threatened with violence. After teasing Nur Ed Din while he lies nude, face-down, on her bed, Zumurrud eventually reveals herself to him, taking off her clothes (unlike the other three films) and the two happily reunite and embrace. Nur Ed Din says, "What a night! God has not created another like it! The beginning was bitter, but how sweet is the end"—and the film ends suddenly with the words "FINE" printed on the screen.

Pasolini's version of a *Nights* film is unlike the other three in many significant ways. Throughout his quest to find Zumurrud, although he is clearly distraught and emotionally ready to even die, Nur Ed Din does not inflict violence or kill anyone to find

her. His role in the film is as a passive hero, even as a lesser hero than Zumurrud, one in the hands of the fates before him, and one who, without his Zumurrud, doesn't almost know how to function on any basic social level. Zumurrud, however, plays a very active role in the film: she buys herself for Nur Ed Din, teaches the boy about sex, finances his life through her artisanship, becomes a "male" king without hesitation, punishes by death the two men who had tried to kidnap her and take her away from Nur Ed Din, and is energetic in her quest to reunite with Nur Ed Din, using and manipulating the "normal" political power in order to find him. The princesses of the other three films do little more than wait to be saved by their heroes and get married. Even Jasmine, who protests her lack of "freedom" often, and seems on some level to be rebellious, must have her father's permission to fulfill her seemingly seditious wish of marrying Aladdin - this is, in a large part, what drives the drama of the film.²⁰⁷ Jasmine's only strength in the film seems to be her sexual allure, which she uses at one point to distract Jafar, pretending she loves the evil vizier, so that Aladdin can actually rescue her. Parisa in *Sinbad* seems like she has some agency when she frees Barani, but it is her ability to be persuaded by the pleading boy, and her reliance on having Sinbad actually physically save Barani instead of herself, that makes her character decidedly weaker than the male hero of the film. And the Princess of Baghdad in *Thief*, is kidnapped and held by Jaffar, and must have Ahmad and Abu save her.

In addition, the characters in *Il fiore* seem to despise political leadership and wealth, and Zumurrud, when she becomes king, uses her power, and the state's resources, only to find Nur Ed Din and to punish the men who had kidnapped her and to feed everyone for free, rather than pursue any state-focused political activity. In the other

three films, the main characters' whole identity is primarily formed by their relationship with, and desire for, political power and wealth. Disney's Aladdin might seem to be a fallen "street rat" type of figure at first,²⁰⁸ as does Prince Ahmad in *Thief* for a brief period (Eisele's "transgression"), but both become political leaders (an heir in the case of Aladdin) at the end of their narrative.

Most importantly to the film's relationship with the G-manuscript *Nights*, the heroes of *Il fiore* are sexually open. They explore and pursue their sexual urges, even when not together, without regret or having it get in the way of their quest or love of one another. The scene before Nur Ed Din and Zumurrud are reunited is taken from the *Nights* story "The Porter and the Three Ladies of Baghdad," where a destitute baggage carrier (in *Il fiore* it is Nur Ed Din) finds himself frolicking in the fountain of a luxurious mansion with three young women who live there alone. The girls and Nur Ed Din are all young, nude and splashing one another in a fountain, laughing and making jokes about their nude bodies. The sequence is a mix of medium shots showing the four in the fountain and close-ups as each one speaks a line from the joke. Although the camera focuses on each person individually, diegetic laughter from the others provides the carefree aural background to the scene, and each character is laughing and smiling throughout, even as the girls playfully slap Nur Ed Din. The sequence ends with a close-up shot of the back of Nur Ed Din's head while two girls converge on either side of him, one in front of him, and all three kissing the boy and embracing him. Nur Ed Din, though still looking for his "true" lost love, still has time to enjoy his sexuality without it ruining his relationship with Zumurrud. He wakes up the next morning, realizes he is still without her, and leaves, running to find Zumurrud, shouting her name. It's not the first time

during his quest that he stops to joyfully engage in sexual activity with other women, however, but his third. In addition, the character of Zumurrud is, from the beginning of the film, a slave sold for sexual purposes and thus presumably well versed in lovemaking, and certainly not one of the virginal and chaste brides-to-be that the heroines of the three other films are portrayed as. This unabashed and open sexuality, the element being transgressed upon by the false world, is what Scheherazade is teaching Shahriyar through her stories. And it is a sexuality that is definitively not “racy” as Shaheen dubbed it. Barth David Schwartz remarks “The eroticism appears in scenes of lovemaking, which never come even close to contemporary notions of pornography. On the contrary the lovers couple with joy – naturally, even wholesomely.”²⁰⁹ Naomi Greene points out “As these tales reveal, in this legendary universe, Eros is the lure, the tool, used by an all-powerful destiny here at its most naked – stripped of psychology, history, and ideology.”²¹⁰ Patrick Rumble calls Pasolini’s sexuality “an inherent resistance to the imposition of bourgeois space,”²¹¹ to which I would add that it is a resistance to any political imposition or definition as well, going well beyond being simply a Marxist critique of capitalism.

The ending of Pasolini’s film, and of the *Nights* story it is based on, is a suggestion rather than a certainty. In the Burton edition of the story, Zumurrud gives up her position as king to someone else and the two reunited lovers ride off together. There is a strong message inherent in both Pasolini and in the textual *Nights* that political power is secondary. This conclusion is decidedly not in the other film versions. In Pasolini, it’s not entirely clear what will happen to the lovers: they are last seen naked in bed, enjoying each other, laughing. There is no resolution to their fate; it is unclear whether Zumurrud can or will continue her guise as king, and the city she rules seems in very shaky hands

politically, and it's not clear how the two will ensure stability for their relationship either, or that any of these things are even important to consider as threats. In *Thief*, *Aladdin*, and *Sinbad*, the resolution points to a solid narrative conclusion and an interpretation that the male hero can control destiny, win the girl, and reinstate state and social stability, rescuing everything from any threat. In Pasolini and in the *Nights*, no such overarching message can be found. The “flower” of the *Nights* is this inherent sense of the undermining of a falsely applied order and stability—the hint of an unhindered representation of Eros, one that can exist without a catastrophe for sociopolitical or romantic order.

In redefining Eisele's ten characteristics, Pasolini also clarifies his position on what he thinks the essence of the *Nights* is as well. In terms of a subversive transgression, there are many throughout the film, but focusing on the resolutions only also reveals much. At the end of the film Zumurrud has an entire city in her power, she is a woman supposed by all to be a man, and she uses her power to give away the wealth of the city for her own personal revenge against her previous kidnappers, and to find Nouredine. Not only is she not wrongfully accused of being an outlaw, she is an outlaw, she is a prostitute/slave girl hero in disguise, and she is posing as being a stable political figure – all characteristics completely the opposite of Aladdin, who seemed to be a street rat, but who, in the final scenes of the film, is revealed to actually be a stable political figure. Zumurrud is the heroic antihero, and is Scheherazade herself in a way, in her ability to manipulate the false constructs of power in order to reveal their failings. Several other undermined definitions of Eisele's characteristics also are seen in the resolution. Zumurrud, in her kingly “joke” on Nouredine, makes him believe he will

forever be (2) separated from Zumurrud, (3) abducts him from the dinner using her political and military superiority, (4) reduces him to a king's sex slave, threatens him with (10) mutilation, (5) inducts him into the court/bedroom, (6) seduces him as a king via her power, and then (7) redeems and (8) reveals herself to him, (9) reaffirming their unlikely romance and redeeming their beliefs in the falsehood (yet ever-present false fear of, as well) of the dominant sociopolitical structures seemingly built up around them. The number of things left unresolved at the end of *Il fiore* is a continuance of Scheherazade's G-manuscript morality – the only thing left, after the lies have been revealed, must be a form of the truth.

To be sure this sexual element of Scheherazade is as much of the *Nights* as it is of Pasolini himself. The filmmaker has a long and well-documented controversial history of his portrayals of sexuality onscreen. Pasolini himself doubted if what he had tried to portray in *Il fiore* was even understood by viewers or critics. Despite their success in being able to effectively showcase a *Nights*-esque notion of sexuality, the filmmaker later dismissed his entire "Trilogy of Life," which included *Il fiore*, *The Decameron* (1971), and *The Canterbury Tales* (1972), largely because he felt this ultimate message he was trying to convey was misinterpreted by viewers who imposed their own skewed views on top of the films, forever tainting them in misunderstanding. His dismissal may have, in part, been a rejection of a popular response to "Trilogy," which resulted in several pornographic knock-off films by others, severe critiques of Pasolini's frank portrayals of sexuality, and an ever-increasing focus on the director's personal life and sexuality in the press.²¹² In his essay "Repudiation of the Trilogy of Life" Pasolini laments the impossibility of his notion of a utopian Eros-driven world given the pornographic

degradation, misinterpretations and sexual repression he saw in Italy and elsewhere in part as a response to his films. The commercial aspects of his films also disturbed him. Peter Bondanella suggests that “*all* forms of sexuality have been assimilated into a cultural system Pasolini despises: consumer capitalism.”²¹³ In his essay Pasolini writes that because people can be contemporaneously as degraded in this way as they are, then even a portrayal of a past utopian existence is false because the potential for degradation is in all people regardless of the time period they live in. So, according to his argument, even his depiction of a utopian past in “Trilogy” is tainted. “If those who were *then* thus and so, have been able to become *now* thus and so, it means that they were potentially such already then; therefore, also their way of being *then* is devalued by the present.”²¹⁴ Pasolini ends his essay with a mention of his last film *Salo* (1979) as being his filmic answer to the degraded state of sexuality he saw at work around him. *Salo* is a notoriously explicit film focusing on sexual abuse that garnered negative attention, and several bans that few controversial films have surpassed. Yet it is a film which, I would argue, still maintains in its ending a suggestion, beneath the grotesque of Pasolini’s fascist slave camp, of a natural, utopian portrayal, of a sexuality at odds with the imposition of outside forces.²¹⁵ Despite focusing on a similar theme throughout many of his films, however, Pasolini celebrates Scheherazade’s openness more so in *Il fiore* than any of his other films, many of which, including the two other films in “Trilogy,” *The Decameron* and *Canterbury Tales*, concentrate specifically on religious restrictions on sexuality, something the *Nights*, and *Il fiore*, do not do.

How, then, if *Thief*, *Aladdin*, and *Sinbad* are all the antithesis, in their resolutions, of *Il fiore*, do they then fit into the newly defined subversive set of characteristics of

Nights-films? The ways in which *Thief*, *Aladdin* and *Sinbad* resolve themselves seem to present a strong argument about the benefits of the restraints of civilization: state stability, control in marriage and socially accepted forms of sexuality and a narrative cohesion that allows for a conclusive resolution. Looking closely at the three films, however, fissures appear throughout their narratives that seem to allude to the “flower” of the *Nights*. This is apparent, in part, through the characters of the “sidekicks” who are all evidence of some threat to the stability of the main narrative. In Disney, for example, there is the final freedom of the Genie, who, wearing Disneyland attire and carrying a golf bag leaves the kingdom by flying into the sky and disappearing into a series of fireworks. In *Thief* there is the sidekick Abu, who, hearing at the end of the film that he was going to be appointed Vizier of the kingdom and part of the state apparatus for life runs away on a flying carpet crying out “I’m going to find what I want...some fun, and adventure at last!” These sidekicks clearly argue for an open-ended resolution with a transgressive message. If Abu is going off to continue his thieving/adventurous ways then the threat to the stability of the state still exists. If the Genie of *Aladdin* is no longer the provider of protection and guarantee of state stability that he was throughout the film, what lies in store for Prince Aladdin and Princess Jasmine, but the reality of an uncertain future with the likely probability of real threats to their kingdom?

In *Sinbad* the genie Barani has also been released from his captivity but instead of running off like Disney’s genie he insists on training to be like Sinbad onboard the sailor’s ship. Barani also gives over his stolen treasure to Sinbad as a wedding present, further enforcing the stability of Sinbad’s marriage and leadership as well as further enforcing the conclusiveness of the resolution of the film. The genie’s new (and “good”)

subservience is to Sinbad and the state. However it's not clear why a load of stolen goods constitutes a marriage gift to a future ruler, if not only to show that political power is, at its core, corrupt and corruptible. What also, perhaps, leads to a transgressive reading is that Sinbad and Parisa are never seen getting married, only sailing toward their marriage. The future, never realized onscreen, of a peaceful political union between their countries, remains uncertain. And in fact, the second Harryhausen produced Sinbad film, 1974's *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, features an unmarried Sinbad who falls for a new girl, the slave Margiana. There is no mention of Princess Parisa. The Sinbad of this film also refuses to become a king when it is offered to him near the film's conclusion, preferring what he calls "freedom," to political leadership and power.

Another major element of Scheherazadian transgression in *Aladdin* is that the law that forbid Jasmine to marry anyone but a Prince, and a plot device largely responsible for running the entire narrative, is essentially tossed aside in a quick deus-ex-machina moment when the king realizes if he can make the laws he can change them. The threat of leadership under such flexible legal conditions leaves a suggestive fissure in the closure of *Aladdin*, that perhaps then there are no laws that cannot be changed, and, therefore, perhaps there are no laws. Also, while Aladdin comes from humble "street-rat" origins, and is shown participating in aiding Jasmine's criminal activity, and escaping from prison, he also becomes a Prince, the next in line to rule Agrabah. This leadership arrangement suggests a political organization flexible enough to accommodate any type of leader, even a former homeless thief with no clear reason why he should be a viable politician, despite Aladdin's new stately wardrobe at the end of the film, and despite efforts by Disney to deliberately play down Aladdin's criminality. In addition,

Agrabah seems like a despotic country where the sultan is the only wealthy inhabitant - from Aladdin and the poor children begging for and stealing food, to the crowd of citizens who mob “Prince Ali” when he throws gold coins into the street during his procession, evidence of the poverty and unhappiness in the land, to the king’s goons and henchmen who run around the streets of the city wielding giant scimitars doing the bidding of the Vizier, all evidence of a distinctly repressed and unhappy political and social landscape.

In *Thief* Abu might have escaped his life as Vizier of the city, but it is evident and pronounced in the film that, unlike Aladdin seems to be, Abu cannot ever be reformed. Abu comes from a long line of proud thieves proclaiming, “I am Abu the thief! Son of Abu the thief! Grandson of Abu the thief!” Abu’s lineage as outsider cements the “order” of the narrative, having the real outsider remain outside and the real insider (Ahmad) be given his rightful place. And yet the thief’s “escape” leaves open the possibility of an unstable kingdom, particularly since Ahmad does have such a close relationship with Abu, but also because Ahmad and the Princess, and the adoring crowds of people, all laugh and wave excitedly at Abu’s transgressive pronouncement as the young thief flies off on a magic carpet to continue his life of criminality.

In addition to the repression and stability of the endings found in the three films there are other moments where the film’s sexual messages of restraint find themselves potentially undermined, and the ways in which this is resolved further cements the repressed atmosphere of the narrative, as well as points to a reading of the *Nights* as being primarily transgressively sexual. A widespread rumor that the scene where Aladdin pushes off Jasmine’s tiger Rajah by saying “Good kitty, take off and go” actually

had the hero saying “Good teenagers take off your clothes,” had Disney edit out the line in their DVD release.²¹⁶ Despite the insistence by Disney that the line was misheard, and unintentional, there are still several very clear instances of an ambiguous sexuality elsewhere in the film. The genie appears at least four times in drag: once as a blond airline stewardess, once as a female newscaster, once flirting with Aladdin alongside a balcony-load of harem women all dressed in cleavage revealing tops, and also as a lipstick laden cheerleader with an obviously fake women’s blond wig. In another scene the genie transforms into a stereotypically “gay” fashion designer fitting Aladdin in princely clothing. The genie also turns his head into a giant pair of lips which kiss Aladdin, and, during a moment of camaraderie, tells Aladdin that he’s “getting kind of fond of you kid, not that I want to pick out curtains or anything.” Another scene involving Jafar’s male parrot companion Iago involves him being “mistaken” for a female from behind by a flirtatious flamingo who is then beaten and threatened with violence by Iago. During the song “Friend Like Me,” the genie suggests that Aladdin could get basically anything from him, including a set of scantily clad dancing harem girls who appear before Aladdin. Later in the film Aladdin has to escape a harem full of similarly clad women pleading for him to stay. In addition, Jasmine, in a revealing slave costume, and, in order to save Aladdin, approaches Jafar sexually, to convince the evil Vizier that she has fallen in love with him by cooing in his ear and actually kissing him. Despite Aladdin’s success in overcoming the “threats” to his monogamous and heterosexual relationship with Jasmine, the reality of a world where such unstable sexualities, and their acceptances and permitted free expressions exist, is very clearly suggested. And despite the resolution, or attempted portrayal of a resolution to all of

these crises at the end of the film, the fact that sexual ambiguity and threats to heteronormativity exist, even in relationships with such close friends as the genie was to Aladdin, means very clearly that the reality of the world is one of sexual uncertainty.

In *The Thief of Bagdad* there is a similar harem scene to *Aladdin* involving Ahmad (who, at this moment in the film is blind) and a group of flirtatious women who gather around the King, who has no shirt on, to hear his story of how he became downtrodden. Ahmad ends up staying in the harem's protection and the women actually help him find the Princess, though he avoids the women's flirtations. Despite this the presence of the women in the film, and their revealing dress, for the viewer, and the marked contrast between what the viewer can see and what Ahmad can't see, all point to a potential threat to Ahmad's loyalty to his Princess. Ahmed sits upright in the center of the frame with no shirt surrounded by the women. The camera zooms in on him and at the same time a woman dressed in pink with a pink turban smoothly sidles up to Ahmad, revealing her bare torso underneath the otherwise seemingly veiled body. Three other women also ease up to Ahmed as he begins to tell his story of woe. At this point we also see his "dog," who used to be his friend, Abu the thief, and, as Ahmad tells this point, he suggestively strokes the dog's head and neck, and there is a further zoom up the dog's eyes which become Abu's in a segue to a flashback. There are also several close-up scenes between the young Abu, who throughout much of the film is dressed only in a loincloth, and Ahmad, that suggest a romantic undercurrent to their relationship.

Sinbad is perhaps the least overtly sexual of all the films and spends most of its narrative on fight scenes between Ray Harryhausen-produced special effects creatures. In fact, as Paul M. Jensen writes, there are very few "strong emotions" between any of

the characters at all, sexual or otherwise. Jensen notes that “Sinbad’s voice holds a note of true concern when he calls out for the Princess after Sokurah has taken her away”²¹⁷ and yet, apart from their goal of marriage, there is very little emotional attachment seen between the couple. One aspect that clearly resonates with a sexual reading is that the Princess is shrunk to about six inches tall and remains in this state for most of the film. This protects her sexuality (most all other characters in the film are male), ensuring her virginity for her marriage night with Sinbad, who carries Parisa around on his belt in a small box. In all three films sexuality is kept “in line,” albeit not without very real threats to it. The heroes and heroines are in a heterosexual relationship that is kept under state control by the institution of marriage and their political relationships to their respective nations. All other forms of sexuality and the potential for sexuality with either members of the same sex or people who are not their “true” loves, while certainly alluded to (potentially transgressive moments of threats against the heroic stability of the heroes) and yet repressed throughout all the films, are serious threats to be dismissed or avoided as indeed they are throughout all of these films. The three films’ over-insistence on a cohesive stability, in its sexual, political and narrative forms seems, by their desperate attempts, to be more of a highlighting of Scheherazade’s ulterior motivation than Pasolini’s overt sexual portrayal. In a comparative framework these potential fissures are highlighted, with Scheherazade’s inversion of the notion of “transgression” as the most clearly defined *Nights*-characteristic at work in the film.

Pasolini tells the audience, with his version of the *Nights* (as Scheherazade comforts Shahriyar with the inherent message in *her* stories), that stability does not have to be violently created and that sexuality does not, and even should not, be repressed

under consensual circumstances in order to maintain a natural social, political, or romantic order. Scheherazade's G-manuscript stories are not merely cliffhanger entertainments told to prolong her life, but stories with an ultimate sexual morality that eventually convinces Shahriyar to change his mind about the nature of the world.

In the *Il fiore* rendering of the *Nights* tale "Aziz and Aziza," one with a lover's triangle between a mysterious woman and a young married couple, Pasolini changes the moral of Burton's rendering "Faith is fair; unfaith is foul" to the much more ambiguous and comical "Fidelity is splendid, but no more than infidelity."²¹⁸ By doing so, Pasolini essentially reverts Burton's moralizing on the tale to what Pasolini saw as its original Scheherazadian transgressive sexual sensibility, one where ambiguity, not certainly, runs the course of human affairs. Pasolini finds this *Nights*, celebrates and extracts its essence, its "flower," to present the morality of Scheherazade in a surprisingly clear and unfettered manner, highlighting the transgressive nature of the *Nights* and, in a comparative framework, revealing it in other *Nights*-films.

¹⁷⁸ Eisele, "The Wild East: Deconstructing the Language of Genre in the Hollywood Eastern," *Cinema Journal* 41.4 (2002): 68-94.

¹⁷⁹ John R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization: Prototypes in Linguistic Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

¹⁸⁰ Eisele, 71.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁸³ These include the non-G manuscript Arabic versions suggested by Muhsin Mahdi (see chapter one) to have been largely written and published by European influence, despite being written in Arabic.

¹⁸⁴ Outlines of the stories of the *Nights* that support this overview can readily be found in Ulrich Marzolph and Richard van Leeuwen, eds., *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, 2 vols., (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004).

- ¹⁸⁵ For a detailed account of Pasolini's funding for "Trilogy" and its box office income, see the chapter "The Trilogy of Life" in Barth Davis Schwartz, *Pasolini Requiem*, (New York: Vintage, 1995).
- ¹⁸⁶ Staples, "Arabian Nights Films," *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Folktales and Fairy Tales: A-F*, Donald Haase, ed., (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), 60.
- ¹⁸⁷ Irwin, "A Thousand and One Nights at the Movies," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 7, no. 2 (July 2004): 223-33.
- ¹⁸⁸ Robert Irwin, "The Arabian Nights in Film Adaptations," *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. Ulrich Marzolph & Richard van Leeuwen, Eds., (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004): 22-5.
- ¹⁸⁹ Irwin, 225 (see n. 11).
- ¹⁹⁰ Wen-Chin Ouyang, "Metamorphoses of Scheherazade in Literature and Film," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66 (2003): 402-15.
- ¹⁹¹ Nurse, *Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World*, (Toronto: Viking, 2010).
- ¹⁹² Cooperson, "The Monstrous Births of 'Aladdin,'" *The Arabian Nights Reader*, (Detroit: Wayne State Press, 2006), 265-282.
- ¹⁹³ Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, (New York: Olive Branch P, 2001): 78.
- ¹⁹⁴ For an extensive online annotated bibliography outlining the myriad books and articles dealing with the Orientalism of Aladdin, see "Aladdin (film) Bibliography," *The Journal of the 1001 Nights* (blog), December 7, 2010, <http://journalofthenights.blogspot.com/2010/12/aladdin-film-bibliography.html>.
- ¹⁹⁵ Wen-Chin Ouyang, "Metamorphoses of Scheherazade in Literature and Film," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66:3 (2003): 403.
- ¹⁹⁶ Robert Irwin, "The Arabian Nights in Film Adaptations," *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*. Vol. 1. Ulrich Marzolph & Richard van Leeuwen, Eds., (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 2004): 24.
- ¹⁹⁷ Shaheen, 78 (see n. 13).
- ¹⁹⁸ Galland claimed to have had four volumes, but only three have ever been found.
- ¹⁹⁹ Husain Haddawy, *The Arabian Nights*, (New York: Knopf, 1990): 428.
- ²⁰⁰ Haddawy's *Arabian Nights II* is especially remarkable because Haddawy translates several Nights stories not found in the Galland manuscript, after spending so much time in the introduction to his first volume, *Arabian Nights* (1990), criticizing most versions of the *Nights* for not being faithful to the "original."
- ²⁰¹ *The Thief of Bagdad*, directed by Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell, et. al. (1940; Los Angeles: United Artists), DVD.
- ²⁰² See Michael Cooperson, "The Monstrous Births of Aladdin," *The Arabian Nights Reader*, Ulrich Marzolph, ed., (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2006): 265-282, for a good introduction to the history of the Thief-related films.
- ²⁰³ *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, directed by Nathan Juran, (1958; Los Angeles: Columbia). DVD.
- ²⁰⁴ The original spelling in Galland and many others is "Sindbad," though "Sinbad" seems to have replaced this as the more commonly accepted form.

²⁰⁵ *Aladdin*, directed by John Musker and Ron Clements, (1992; Los Angeles: Walt Disney). DVD.

²⁰⁶ She is, of course, still a slave and a woman. Both statuses in this film, as in the Nights, suggest inferiority in terms of political and social power. This, however, strengthens my argument, as it is a portrayal of a false world at odds with the reality (portrayed by Zumurrud's strength and agency) of nature.

²⁰⁷ It is not rebellious, of course, because we are repeatedly told Aladdin is not a bad person in that he is, despite his past, completely eager to become the heir to the crown, as is clearly shown in the final scenes of the film. Aladdin joins Jasmine in the castle; Jasmine does not join Aladdin in his rooftop hideaway.

²⁰⁸ In an interview on disc two of *Aladdin*, the film's co-producer, Amy Pell, admits to fashioning Aladdin's character away from his thief persona and more toward being a "good" person. She says, "Here you have a street urchin, a thief, and we wanted to be very careful that we weren't glamorizing that kind of behavior."

²⁰⁹ Schwartz, 605-6 (see n. 11).

²¹⁰ Greene, *Pier Paolo Pasolini*, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1990): 195.

²¹¹ Patrick Rumble, *Allegories of Contamination: Pier Paolo Pasolini's Trilogy of Life*, (Toronto: U Toronto P, 1996): 74.

²¹² See Schwartz (n. 11) and Peter Bonadella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*, (New York: Continuum, 1983), for evidence and further bibliographic information to defend these claims.

²¹³ Bondanella, 203-4.

²¹⁴ Pasolini, "Repudiation of the Trilogy of Life," *Heretical Empiricism*, Trans. Ben Lawton and Louise K. Barnett. (Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2005): xviii.

²¹⁵ Despite its insistence on highlighting the various ways people can degrade one another the evidence I find in *Salo* is the portrayal of the two women who sneak off to have a love affair, filmed with, despite the necessity of hiding and of their ultimate demise, a joy in their sexuality that is distinctly similar to that portrayed in *Il fiore*. In addition there is the secret love affair between a man and a servant, the servant, notably, is played by Ines Pellegrini, who plays Zumurrud in *Il fiore*. This relationship is also filmed in a Nights-esque manner, with the joy of their eros and love with one another underneath all of the degradation and unhappiness at work in most of the film. These instances seem to me to be "natural" occurrences in the face of the "unnatural" setup at play in the palace. While the ending of *Salo*, with the natural lovers and most everyone else all dying horrible deaths, certainly suggests an overall pessimistic view of sexuality and of humanity, the notion that Pasolini provides in these two "natural" instances is enough, I would argue, to provide at least a suggestive optimistic fissure at work in the narrative.

²¹⁶ See "Take Off Your Clothes!," *Snopes.com: Rumor Has It*, last modified August 19, 2007, <http://www.snopes.com/disney/films/aladdin.asp>, for an overview and for related news sources.

²¹⁷ Paul Jensen, *The Men Who Made the Monsters*, (New York: Twayne, 1996): 120.

²¹⁸ This discrepancy is mentioned in Staples (see n. 12).

The Trouble with Burton:

20th century Criticism and the Dismissal of History

Richard Francis Burton is the author of over forty books on a diverse variety of subjects ranging from the ethnic groups and geography of India (including *Goa and the Blue Mountains* (1851)), proper uses of the bayonet (*A Complete System of Bayonet Exercise* (1853)), an account of his hajj pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina disguised as an Afghan Muslim (*Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al Madinah and Meccah* (1865-6)), numerous anthropological and geographical books on Africa including *The Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860), a book on Mormons and Utah (*The City of the Saints* (1861)), Iceland (*Ultima Thule* (1872)), books of original poetry including *Stone Talk* (1865), a number of translations of literary works including *The Kama Sutra* (1883) and *The 1001 Nights* (1885) as well as countless journal articles and reviews. What Burton seems to be most known for and most remembered for today, however, judging from the amount of writing done about him, seems to be the various controversies surrounding his larger than life persona rather than his writing. His *Nights*, however, is the work most often associated with Burton, but the conversation on Burton's *Nights* typically has more to do with its related controversies rather than the text itself.

By looking at the various critiques of Richard Burton, both during and shortly after his life and comparing them with 20th and 21st century critiques, a curious trend is clear. The earlier criticisms of the 19th century can generally be grouped together as part of a collection of what I intend to show is a “defensive” critique. These critiques sought to protect the English Victorian status quo from Burton’s writings. And while they for the most part attempted to censor Burton, or even dismiss him, they failed to have much impact on how Burton was received at the time period, except perhaps to garner the explorer more popularity. Later criticism of Burton, particularly in the mid to late 20th century and beyond, is clearly “offensive” criticism – criticism built not to protect anything but rather to excoriate. This criticism has been, in fact, dismissive to the point of being detrimental to contemporary understandings of history and has also clearly succeeded in its dismissals of Burton where past criticism didn’t. In fact later criticism of Burton has led to a comprehensive rewriting of history, not replacing Burton with anything in particular, but rather just erasing him almost entirely. Post-Burton versions of the *Nights* have built on this dismissal and every major English version of the *Nights* since Burton has deliberately attempted to distance itself from Burton’s unique contribution to the history of this story collection. What this has led to in a larger sense is a misrepresentation of the past to such an extent that both Burton and his works have been substantially marginalized and discredited. This chapter attempts to show, however, through a comprehensive investigation into critiques based on Burton’s translation of the *1001 Nights* and critiques of his political intentions that much of this criticism is either already stated overtly by Burton himself, or is unfounded based on the principles of much of contemporary translation theory. By doing so this chapter’s hope is to open a space in

which Burton can be viewed more clearly and his contributions to both history and literature can be examined in a more honest, critical and yet not necessarily laudatory, light.

When these critiques are organized in this temporally specific manner several generalizations can be made about Burton-related criticisms that center themselves on historically situated events in theoretical studies rather than having much to do with Burton specifically at all. The bulk of criticism during and shortly after Burton's life focused on three main areas: 1. Problems that Burton had with authorities, 2. Burton's potentially subversive activities impersonating other cultures and religions and 3. Burton's focus on sexuality in his writing and research. While all three groups of criticism failed to succeed they nevertheless would engage with and remain a constant negative presence throughout Burton's life and are quite possibly, ironically, responsible for the continuing interest in Richard Burton.

This chapter's evidence throughout rests on specific examples from the great deal of writing on Burton but all examples are representative of a much more widespread understanding of Burton. The three areas of 19th century critique can be easily found in any of Burton's many (at least thirty non-fiction and several overtly fictional) biographies and are all well documented. In fact they can all be readily found in his version of the *1001 Nights*, which, under Burton's hand led to problems with authority in terms of publishing houses and censors, highlighted subversive literary aspects of the text, focused on and even celebrated cultural and anthropological habits of the people of the East that Burton found lacking in Victorian England and spent a great deal of time on the various mentions of sexuality in the text. Burton's *Nights* seems to relish putting itself up

deliberately against perceived authorities of morality and vice. In its opening pages Burton declares that: “In accordance with my purpose of reproducing the *Nights*, not *virginibus puerisque*, but in as perfect a picture as my powers permit, I have carefully sought out the English equivalent of every Arabic word, however low it may be or ‘shocking’ to ears polite.”²¹⁹ In addition, also in his introduction, Burton demands of the reader a level of respect for the Islamic world, a region largely under English rule at the time and one Burton sees as being under the rule of an unappreciative, uncaring colonial power unwilling to learn from its colonies. He writes that English colonial rulers “must be, firstly, honest and truthful and, secondly, familiar with and favourably inclined to their manners and customs if not to their law and religion,”²²⁰ touting a colonialism that seems to favor the culture of the colonized almost more than itself. Burton’s focus on sexuality in his writing, particularly in his *Nights*, goes without saying. The author sets up his *Nights* against past versions that censor the inherent sexual nature of the *Nights*, not only adding a heightened sexuality to the narrative of the *Nights*, but also to his many footnotes, endnotes and additional essays.

There are, as well, many other works and biographical instances of these criticisms that highlight their prevalence in Burton’s life. Burton’s problems with authority, for example, are well documented²²¹ and these would forever color the image of Burton in most writings about him or his works. Burton was involved in gambling scandals at Oxford, which led to his departure from the university early. Burton had issues with and was reprimanded by several of his superiors while employed in the British service including in India and Damascus. He was also looked down upon with suspicion and derision for his multiple impersonations which included dressing and

travelling as the half-Persian, half-Arab “Mirza Abdullah” the merchant, in India, masquerading as a doctor in Egypt, and disguising himself as an Afghan pilgrim to Mecca and Medina. These problems would lead Burton to suspect them being behind his various consular and military placements in unimportant English outposts like Fernando Po, Benin and Trieste.

Burton’s consular posting in Damascus was also controversial because it was suggested that he wasn’t fit for the job due to his controversial nature and his previous undertakings in the Middle East, which, according to those in authority, might have led Burton to taking a non-English, but rather Muslim or Arab centered favoritism. *A Rage to Live*, Mary Lovell’s biography of Burton and his wife outlines some of the resistance Burton was facing from his superiors. Lovell quotes a letter that “Henry Elliot (later Sir Henry), British Ambassador at Constantinople to whom the Consul of Damascus reported” wrote against “Burton, whose character was so well known in the East as to make it a certainty that trouble would come from it” because of a potential for his incapability to represent “the seat of administration” without being biased because of his background as a traveler to the region.²²² While his problems with authority would be a nuisance in his life Burton still remained under the employ of the English government until his death. This employment allowed the funding of his various explorations and books as well as gave him a great deal of time, as he himself often has said, to spend on his literary, geographic and cultural pursuits while under the employ as a representative in some obscure foreign office that saw little if any day to day business.

His immersion into other cultures and religions and the lengths he was willing to go for authenticity’s sake would also be at the forefront of criticism during and shortly

after his lifetime. Later critiques of Burton's anthropological attempts by people like Rana Kabbani, Parama Roy and Edward Said would base themselves on this element of Burton's life but would not criticize Burton for threatening to "become" Indian, Afghan, Arab or Muslim and not English, but would mainly situate their critiques on Burton as a representative of Imperial power masquerading as native and the inherent problems with that perspective. During his life, however, Burton suffered tremendous amounts of critique from his fellow soldiers and governmental officials as well as those in the press. People thought his masquerading had gone too far and he had actually become a Muslim and in many respects a threat to England herself. Both the letter quoted in Lovell above and the 1856 review of Burton's book *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah* in the *Edinburgh Review* quoted in Chapter Two highlight the general sense of this threat. The *Review* wrote critically of Burton "crawling among a crowd of unbelievers" and "the objects of their wretched superstition"²²³ as if he were a true believer. These critiques against him, however, would not succeed in dismissing Burton's contributions to English understandings in the fields of anthropology, religion, geography and more. Burton's cultural and ethnological authority remained well established and celebrated throughout his life and beyond.

Burton's literary ventures highlighting sexuality, particularly his interests and writings on the various sexual behaviors of different foreign cultures would also play a major role in outside criticism. His investigation into male child brothels in Karachi, for example, prompted many to make the claim that Burton himself partook of the child prostitute for authenticity's sake. These claims would never be more than hearsay and would never be confirmed but regardless they would also color his legacy in the eyes of

those who would critique him. Burton also played up his own role as firsthand investigator, Kennedy writes that “The studied ambiguity that Burton creates regarding his own involvement in these activities gives a daringly intimate, even confessional, quality”²²⁴ to his essay on the Karachi investigation. It was Burton’s translations of the *Kama Sutra* and the *Nights* that would primarily be pointed to as examples of the main, sexually related, problems in Burton’s writing, however. His additional notes and essays in his version of the *1001 Nights* would especially draw the ire of several of his detractors. In spite of this - or perhaps because of - his insistence on sexuality throughout his life, Burton’s studies and writings were generally seen in the late 19th century as contributing an understanding of foreign sexual customs.

Despite the continuous and vociferous criticisms Burton faced during his life they were largely overshadowed by the positive acceptance that he had as an explorer, cultural expert, linguist, author and more. As detailed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Burton was venerated in many circles and garnered respect for the depth of his explorations and for his knowledge of both other cultures and the geography of previously unexplored regions. The 19th century critiques against Burton would never be enough to obscure the importance of him and his legacy during and shortly after his life. This positive view of Burton would find particular manifestation in the reception of his translation of the *Nights*, both the expectations of its release and subsequent reviews of the work. Coupled with these reviews were the notions that his literature and his translation carried with it something more than poetics, some important scientific truths about unknown areas of the earth, and it is in this more scientific area that Burton’s *Nights* would find the focus of both its critiques and its accolades.

Despite the criticisms surrounding Burton during and shortly after his life he manages to evade being dismissed by them and in fact his legacy seems to both grow and survive because of these critiques. His version of the *Nights* alone highlights his evasion of problems with authority by the successful publication of his version and its many reprints and later versions, reclamation of his role as English authority on foreign cultures despite his potentially subversive investigatory activities and presentation to the English reader sexual customs, practices and language that was positively received. Later criticism of Burton, however, has had an opposite effect on his legacy and influence.

What is most interesting and curious about the critiques and controversies surrounding Burton is that they have changed over time, and later critiques, particularly late 20th century criticism in the West, seem to have little if anything to do with the earlier criticism surrounding Burton. This may have something to do with the nature of the earlier criticisms as being antiquated by contemporary standards, but the difference in approaches to the criticism surrounding Burton is marked. Late 20th century criticism largely centers around three main points: 1. The (negative) political motivations of Burton as a member of the English colonial machine, 2. Burton's shortcomings as a translator and literary author, and 3. Burton's misrepresentations of race and culture, which usually is coupled with his political motivations in point 1. There is little to no criticism on Burton's rebelliousness against Victorianism, controversy that Burton may have truly become a Muslim or that he was somehow less British because of his cultural interests, or about Burton's ability to scandalize due to the sexual nature of his work. In fact many of these criticisms have been not even considered in contemporary Burton criticism.

Main elements of later criticism of Burton in the 20th century have two very distinct subgroups, one involving Edward Said and postcolonial criticism and the other involving translation studies and literary issues. Both of these groups form the bulk of Burton criticism in the 20th century and beyond. Both are dismissive in their intents and have been detrimental to contemporary understandings of Burton, and even to the production, and understanding of, both translation and literature outside of Burton as well. While criticism of Burton during the 19th century relied also on dismissive tactics and reasons it had at its core a defensive goal. Burton was anti-authority, a threat to the established order of the English government. Burton possibly became a Muslim and was reviled for impersonating cultures of the East which was a threat to the Victorian concept of what an Englishman was. Burton revealed a side of sexuality not common to England, a threat to Victorian sexual conservatism generally. Later 20th century criticism was more offensive, however. Burton was a scholar of the East with authority who became, via this criticism, a nefarious colonizer speaking for – perverting and distorting - a lesser subaltern who didn't want to be colonized. Burton was an author and translator of medieval Eastern texts who becomes a pseudo-scholar with cursory language and translation skills, poor authorship and subversive intentions against those texts. These two groupings of criticism are markedly different and are also remarkable for how little they overlap and yet they seem to be detrimental because of the dismissive qualities of them, and in how they have influenced scholarship on Burton, the *Nights*, and the 19th century in general, since then.

Criticism about Burton's translations and writing in the 20th century and beyond, mainly of the *1001 Nights*, have largely been dismissive of his style, tone and content,

suggesting that Burton's *Nights* may have been popular, but was and is stylistically a poor translation. An editorial note in the latest English translation of the *Nights* by Malcolm Lyons (2008) suggests that "Burton's translation nonetheless contained many errors [not expanded upon], and even in the 1880s his English read strangely."²²⁵ In 1990 Husain Haddawy called Burton's translation "outlandish" and "grotesque" and accused Burton of writing with "a style that is totally alien both to the style of the Arabic original and to any recognizable style in English literature."²²⁶ In 1972 NJ Dawood called Burton's language "a curious brand of English, a language which no Englishman has spoken or written at any time" which "detract[s] from the literary quality of his translation without in any way enhancing its fidelity to the original."²²⁷ While these criticisms are found in the introductions to newer and presumably "better" (thus the critiques of past versions) English translations of the *Nights*, they are also indicative of a certain generalized critique surrounding Burton's translation as seen by 20th and 21st century critics and writers. This critique has found its way even in general popular references to Burton. A recent *Wall Street Journal* article from August 30, 2009 was continuing the call against Burton's literary qualities calling Burton's *Nights* "practically unreadable."²²⁸ David Mikics calls Burton "largely unreadable," characterizing his translation as a "clotted labyrinth of a style, stilted, languorous, and full of inkhorn terms."²²⁹ C. Knipp writes that Burton's *Nights* is "the most nearly unreadable one in our language."²³⁰ What is clear from reviewing these critiques is that Burton had produced a "faulty" translation due to his translating and writing style.

How, though, is translation quantitatively measured in terms of its success? By looking at several examples of translation, including Burton's *Nights*, through the lens of

key academic texts in translation theory, this chapter shows that the measure of a translation is curiously and problematically undefined by anything concrete besides maybe sales figures. Translation Studies, while a field and practice as old as literature itself, has only recently become a solidified academic discipline in Western universities and has taken on the burden of dealing with the abstract issues inherent in translation.

“The growth of Translation Studies as a separate discipline is a success story of the 1980s,”²³¹ Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere write in the well referenced 1990 book *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook*. The formation of a serious and isolated academic discipline regarding translation is a relatively new venture. At the core of this discipline, however, still lie several important underdeveloped issues regarding the notion of translation and translatability as it is related to literature. These issues center on the essentially impossible notion of translation (one culturally, temporally, linguistically-reliant piece of literature into some other being) and all of its subsequent issues. When such an impossible text as the *Nights* is brought into the discussion the theoretical becomes even more abstract. With a work like the *Nights*, for example, what constitutes an “original” is an exercise in futility. Not only is there no one single original source manuscript or even set of manuscripts but no original author or authors as well. Robert Irwin states that “the *Nights* are really more like the New Testament, where one cannot assume a single manuscript source, nor can one posit an original fixed canon.”²³² Most all scholarship on the *Nights* has attempted to delve into its origins. In addition the work has been translated and retranslated into just about every language in the world, retranslated (and authored) by unscrupulous scholars and authors from European translations into Arabic and passed off as original “lost” manuscripts and stories,

bowdlerized and eroticized, editions have plagiarized other translations while other editions contain stories not found anywhere else. “Versions” by such disparate authors as Robert Louis Stevenson (*New Arabian Nights* (1882)), Naguib Mahfouz (*Arabian Nights and Days* (1981)) and John Barth (*The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor* (1991)), for example, contain little more than references to the title of the work in their indirect treatments of the *Nights*, while yet other European translations of the *Nights* profess a complete faithfulness to the Arabic original. Taking the seemingly limitless stretchability of the *Nights* to fit the whims of its handlers seems to have been the only verifiable fact of the *Nights* in its history. How then, can one effectively judge a “translation” of the *Nights*, particularly one so ironically self-aware as Burton’s is? One of the more general essays on the notion of translation is also one of the foundational texts of translation studies: Walter Benjamin’s “The Task of the Translator” (1923), included in several Translation Studies texts including the canonical academic resource *The Translation Studies Reader* (2000) edited by Lawrence Venuti. By examining Burton’s *Nights* through Benjamin and other important Translation Studies theories the idea that Burton’s translation or his literary ability can effectively be questioned seems negligible at best. In fact, by examining Burton’s own self-reflexive notes as a translator alongside elements of 19th century translation practices, Burton seems to exemplify what these generalized and underdeveloped notions of what a translator is.

Benjamin’s essay outlines several of the difficulties of translating while couching the craft of translation itself in poetic language. The ultimate goal of the successful translator, he suggests, should be “in finding that intended effect upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original.”²³³ In doing so the

translator has been successful not in merely passing on “information,” which Benjamin suggests is the hallmark of poor translations, but instead has passed on something of “the essential substance of a literary work...the unfathomable, the mysterious, the ‘poetic.’”²³⁴

While operating at a very abstract level, Benjamin is also giving form to that abstraction by pointing to the notion of poetics as key to the successful operation of translation.

Burton attempts the same goal in his translation - writing that he wants to pass on the “spirit” and the “*mecanique*”²³⁵ in order to produce “as perfect a picture as [his] powers permit.”²³⁶ This spirit seems to be an apt representation of what Benjamin calls “echo,” a reproduction of sorts, of an abstract inherent identity in the source text, something Burton addresses very clearly in his introduction.

Benjamin writes that “Fidelity and freedom in translation have traditionally been regarded as conflicting tendencies.”²³⁷ The ultimate faithfulness to presenting a text perfectly faithfully would be in presenting the text exactly as it is, which of course would not be a translation, but rather merely a reproduction. Being faithful to the text, Benjamin says, necessarily means that the translator must be flexible and indeed stretch the boundaries of the target language, in order to faithfully reproduce the essence of the original text. While a very abstract notion Benjamin’s musings on translation are almost at the same time essential to consider when defining such an abstract concept as “translation”. Burton was not necessarily faithful to the “original” mainly because he had so many “originals” to work with and yet he deliberately attempted to transmit that “poetic” essence Benjamin speaks of into its English equivalent. The attempts by Burton, and by Benjamin, to define effectively the poetic nature of translation, appear to highlight the inability to clearly define the task of the translator. Instead, as outlined in Chapter

Two of this dissertation, it seems that examining “translations” as texts that have been “paratextually” amended seems, in part, to be a more concrete way of looking at translation in general.

Benjamin also suggests that the translator must necessarily, and obviously, do something different than the poet writing an original work. The translator must reconcile themselves with the original somehow because inherent in the act of translation is the existence of the original. “The intention of the poet is spontaneous, primary, graphic; that of the translator is derivative, ultimate, ideational.”²³⁸ The poet is on a very important level the source here, while for the translator, that source must always be the original text, something outside of the translator, according to Benjamin. What that means to the *Nights*, of course, is problematic because there are no strict originals and instead there are numerous variations, suggesting that every version of the *Nights* is at once a translation with a previous original and also at once a “primary” source containing new material. Despite the very clear nature of the *Nights* of the G-manuscript as outlined in Chapter One, its variants have effectively and conclusively given the *Nights* a much more variegated existence than only its G-manuscript self. The *Nights* seems to exist in a highly abstract space as a conceptual object - measureable perhaps now by some remnants of the G-manuscript - rather than a fixed text, and as such there really can never be a faulty translation of it.

Translation as a concept seems to be unable to be comprehensively spoken of in “non-Benjaminian” terms, that is, in some non-abstract theoretical arena using clear scientific rational methods and approaches. It is only in this theoretical zone that the “science” of translation can be approached, the “science” of literary studies, therefore.

Burton produced a translation of a work without an original. It is a reconstruction of a non-existent literature using pieces of what could or could not be pieces of itself. In fact Burton heavily relied on John Payne's translation, almost re-translating Payne into "Burtonese," alongside other important sources.²³⁹ And yet Burton's *Nights* are very much about Burton himself. In essence Burton's *Nights* is a new work entirely built of paratextual amendments, which, given its shaky foundations, cannot possibly be effectively judged in terms of its merits as a "good" translation or not. The charges against Burton's *Nights* as a faulty translation therefore are in many important ways essentially untenable. Given Burton's *Nights*' immense commercial success as a work of literature, those charges based on literary reasons seem especially faulty. That most of these charges were leveled against him in the introductions to new editions points to one possible reason: the need for the new translator to justify their new translation, and by diminishing Burton, this adds to their edition's own personal worth to readers, but it is a criticism which has lasted against Burton to this day as well.

What Burton seems to do on some level is to situate the reason for the need for his version of the *Nights* primarily in the notion that previous translations failed to capture the narrative "spirit" of the stories in their respective target languages. What Burton wanted to do was to make the *Nights* new for English readers by being faithful not only to the actual literal words of the versions he was translating from, but also its poetics: "by preserving intact, not only the spirit, but even the *mecanique*, the manner and the matter,"²⁴⁰ the literary qualities which made the story collection so important to its original audience as Burton saw them.

Compare Burton's statement to the intent of Haddawy and a very different proclamation, but one that is situated squarely on a rejection of Burton, is highlighted. Husain Haddawy based his English translation, *The Arabian Nights*, solely on the Arabic G-manuscript which Muhsin Mahdi reconstructed because it "is like a restored icon or musical score, without the added layers of paint or distortions, hence, as close to the original as possible."²⁴¹ While this restoration process that Mahdi undertook seems very close to what Burton intended to do, Haddawy is quite clear about his different take on what was important in translation. Burton, Galland, Lane and other European translators "simply failed to see that fidelity to the precise detail was crucial to achieve the essential quality of the *Nights*,"²⁴² what they lacked was a precise and exact duplication, and this, Haddawy says, is where his English translation will be most apparently different and yet more authentically accurate.

What Haddawy sets out to do is to provide an English version of the *1001 Nights* that is deliberately devoid of literary quality, something Benjamin actually cautions against. On literary style he says he does not want to take any "liberties with the text"²⁴³ and instead "used literary ornament judiciously because what appealed to Arabic thirteenth- or fourteenth-century literary taste does not always appeal to the taste of the modern English reader" and even did away with "the rhymed prose of the original because it is too artificial and too jarring to the English ear."²⁴⁴ In addition Haddawy states that he "avoided the temptation to add a distinctive color or stamp a personal manner or mannerism on the original in order to appeal to the reader."²⁴⁵ Haddawy focused on the manner of his translation in such a way that it became a non-literary textual translation and seemed instead to be a scientifically based reproduction into the

target language instead without the interference of himself as author. Much of Haddawy's intense focus on authenticity seemed, according to his introduction, to be clearly set against the faultiness of Burton, who obscured the *Nights* in an unauthentic cloak.

Haddawy's vision of his translation seems to be in line with a lot of what Muhsin Mahdi intended to do with the reconstruction and analysis of Galland's Arabic manuscript and Mahdi's comparative study of other existing Arabic manuscripts. Mahdi's goal was to reconstruct what could reasonably be seen as an example of the oldest manuscript of the *Nights* using Galland's three volume Syrian manuscript and comparing it to other older editions. In doing so however, Mahdi definitively sets out his goal against past scholars, translators, and collectors, groups of people he claims who have obscured the original nature of the *Nights* to such an extent that the original was lost. "Generations of scholars had to labor before it became possible for someone like myself to arrive at a satisfactory resolution"²⁴⁶ to what the original *Nights* may have looked like, Mahdi suggests. Mahdi's goal in his restoration, and Haddawy's in his English translation is to seemingly clear away the literary and poetic qualities of the *Nights* and instead focus on the scientific reconstruction of the Arabic original.

The fact that Mahdi and Haddawy were working toward many of the same goals – piecing together the original, one in Arabic, one in English, and the non-literary, non-poetic nature of these goals meant that the stories and their literary language got pushed to the background in favor of this new notion of "authenticity." Burton, however, embellished his English version to try and mimic the literary styles in the *Nights*. If we are to place these translations together the differences become even clearer. Burton was

working with a variety of sources for his translation but seems to have used primarily the Calcutta II edition and Payne's English translation as sources. What a cursory examination of Burton alongside Haddawy's G-manuscript shows, however, is how much more focused in style, rhyme and rhythm Burton was.

In the first selection Scheherazade is described. In this Arabic version there is a long list of rhyming adjectives, which suggests a sort of poetic nature to the text, culminating in the very short and to the point adjectives for being "well-read" and "smart" or "learned".²⁴⁷ Haddawy's translation is based on this version and his language, as he admitted in his introduction, is pared down, stripped of its poetry, rhyme, and literary qualities: "The older daughter, Shahrazad, had read the books of literature, philosophy, and medicine. She knew poetry by heart, had studied historical reports, and was acquainted with the sayings of men and the maxims of sages and kings. She was intelligent, knowledgeable, wise and refined. She had read and learned."²⁴⁸ Compare this with Burton's description and the lack of literary qualities in Haddawy becomes even clearer: "Now he had two daughters, Shahrazad and Duniyazad hight, of whom the elder had perused the books, annals and legends of preceding Kings, and the stories, examples and instances of by-gone men and things; indeed it was said that she had collected a thousand books of histories relating to antique races and departed rulers. She had perused the works of the poets and knew them by heart; she had studied philosophy and the sciences, arts and accomplishments; and she was pleasant and polite, wise and witty, well read and well bred."²⁴⁹ Burton adds a certain lightness and humor in his rhyming words and unusual English that fits the description of the elder, smarter daughter with literary flourishes. The poetry and rhythm of the G-manuscript provides a rhythm that propels

the story, as well as a slight undercurrent of irony and humor, that without seems to fall flat. Again consider the description of the ensorcelled prince when the king first sees him from Haddawy: “He was a handsome young man, with a full figure, clear voice, radiant brow, bright face, downy beard, and ruddy cheeks, graced with a mole like a speck of amber.”²⁵⁰ And Burton’s edition: “and he fair to the sight, a well shaped wight, with eloquence dight; his forehead was flower-white, his cheek rosy bright, and a mole on his cheek-breadth like an ambergris mite; even as the poet doth indite.”²⁵¹ It is clear from these few passages that Haddawy’s version is much sparser and less literary, as he intended. What is not clear is the purpose behind Haddawy’s translation in this way. If it is not for the sake of literature, as Haddawy himself admits, and it is for the sake of “truly” capturing the authenticity of the original manuscript, then Haddawy’s translation seems to be a self defeating occupation, for what is literary translation but the act of creating literature? It seems that the criticisms regarding Burton’s translation, and his handling of the material, has created this genre of translation wherein care regarding exactitude and precision overrule literary style or poetics. Haddawy clearly sets his own translation up against Burton, making sure in his introduction, and in his sparse prose that he is as un-Burton as possible. Clearly the dismissal of Burton’s translation has had dismissive results on subsequent ideas of what the *Nights* are, and what a translation of them should ideally look like.

The nature of a story collection like the *Nights* is essentially, however, elusive by its very non-existence. For a text to be translated it has to first exist, as Riccardi aptly points out: “The text to be translated is a complete text, it is a finished product, it can be read prior to starting.”²⁵² What then to be done with a text that cannot be read before

translating it? A text whose very nature relies on improvisation, on formlessness, on stories within stories that have no clear boundaries? For Haddawy and Mahdi this issue is not important. In their work their aim is to compile a faithful original using exacting standards of academic caliber not found in the *Nights* and its origins. What they do however is to leave the focus on the stories, the art, the literature itself behind and instead focus on this reclamation of the *Nights*. Burton on the other hand tackles the formlessness, humor, sexuality and poetics of the *Nights* directly.

While it is clear that Burton was writing in and translating during the 19th century, and to take a contemporary view of his writing, and judge it by contemporary standards is problematic, many of the critiques quoted in this chapter do just that. By doing so they are dismissive of the temporally situated *Nights* of Burton, and of the 19th century as well, and as we've seen, the attempts to rewrite that literary history have obscured its true presence and influence at the time. Did Burton, however, not follow the standards of translation practice at the time period he was living in? By looking at what those standards were, and comparing Burton with them, it is clear that he was indeed engaged in a very temporally located style of translation work.

Another key Translation Studies text is Susan Bassnett-McGuire's *Translation Studies*, which outlines the historical elements at play during different time periods, and how they affected the output of translation. In *The Translation Studies Reader* Lawrence Venuti calls Bassnett-McGuire's book "a timely intervention that heralds the emergence of translation studies as a separate discipline" and one which "fills the need for an introductory text in the translation classroom"²⁵³ Bassnett-McGuire lists five main points which governed the typical 19th century translation, all of which could be modeled on

Burton's *Nights*, and all of which Burton engages directly with himself. That Burton fulfills each of these five main points suggests that criticisms regarding his translation should both take into account the methodology of 19th century English translations, and also the uniqueness of Burton's text, which actually positions itself to be only taken on its own individual terms even apart from the Arabic "original." This brief overview showcases the need for translation studies based scholarship to situate itself more in specifics – who is the translator, when was the translator working, what and how did the translator do what he did, and what source materials was the translator working from – all vital considerations to consider before studying any translation from any time period. This list seems evident, but given the nature of the dismissal of Burton based on his translating skills points to a critique of him that is not based on anything specific.

Bassnett-McGuire outlines a series of five points which seem to govern much of 19th century European translation practices: "(1) Translation as a scholar's activity, where the preeminence of the SL [source language] text is assumed *de facto* over any TL [target language] version."²⁵⁴ This point could certainly hold true for all translation in general, the source text in the source language will always be the eminent text in a translation, although certainly some translations are better known than their originals, the *Nights* perhaps being the perfect example of this. For Burton, whose authority as a scholar has been shown, the notion of the Arabic original as being the "best" was at the forefront of his endeavor. "Our century of translations, popular and vernacular, from (Professor Antoine) Galland's delightful abbreviation and adaptation (A.D. 1704), in no wise represent the eastern original."²⁵⁵ Burton maintains the preeminent status of the original, looking down on all past attempts to translate it, and also is careful to outline his

own goals of not surpassing the original but rather of providing a “faithful copy of the great Eastern Saga-book”²⁵⁶ rather than a version which could ever supplant the original. Burton is careful to outline his own admiration of the *Arabic Nights*, something in which he found “a talisman against ennui and despondency”²⁵⁷ and something, by translating, he could attempt to share with non-Arabic readers or speakers.

“(2) Translation as a means of encouraging the intelligent reader to return to the SL original.”²⁵⁸ Burton takes this up directly in his introduction encouraging the interested reader, who, upon learning so much about the customs of the East was still interested in returning to the original language version. “If my labours induce him to attack the [original] text of *The Nights* he will become master of much more Arabic than the ordinary Arab owns.”²⁵⁹ As outlined in both this chapter and in Chapter Two Burton was a vocal proponent of his fellow English learning more Arabic, about Islam, and more about the Middle East, not, according to Burton, to demand it to be more English, but rather for the English to become more Middle Eastern, here, problematically, even more so than “the ordinary Arab” yet his intent seems clear enough. In doing so, Burton distinctly sets up his *Nights* as a pathway back to the Arabic, professing its role as being one not of sole English authority, but rather an inspiration for others to read it in the Arabic original.

“(3) Translation as a means of helping the TL reader become the equal of what Schleiermacher called the better reader of the original, through a deliberately contrived foreignness in the TL text.”²⁶⁰ The original reader of the TL *Nights*, according to Burton, would have to have an intimate understanding of the customs and mannerisms inherent in the work. After reading Burton’s edition with its explanatory notes the translator

promises that “The student who adds the notes of Lane (“Arabian Society,” etc., before quoted) to mine will know as much of the Moslem East and more than many Europeans who have spent half their lives in Orient lands.”²⁶¹ In addition Burton promises to acquaint his reader with the translator’s “familiarity not only with their idiom but with their turn of thought” and their “practices and customs which interest all mankind.”²⁶² Only Burton’s edition, according to the author, can place the reader at a similar level as an Arabic speaking person reading the original in Arabic. As to the “deliberately contrived foreignness” Burton attempts to aid the reader with his copious anthropological notations throughout his edition and his own more faithful transliterations of Arabic names, places, food items, religious elements and other Arabic words into English than previous European editions have.

“(4) Translation as a means whereby the individual translator who sees himself like Aladdin in the enchanted vaults (Rossetti’s imaginative image) offers his own pragmatic choice to the TL reader.”²⁶³ Apart from the fortuitous use of the *Nights* here, Burton does make deliberate use of the perception of himself as someone passing on the marvels that are unseen to those who cannot read the source language. He begins his introduction with a lengthy and romanticized overview of how the *Nights* were originally transmitted orally, setting up an Arabian backdrop “under the diaphanous skies, in air glorious as aether”²⁶⁴ he promises to replicate for the English reader so that the reader can be like a Bedouin listener of the tales sitting on the sand in the desert night “breathless with attention” and seeming “to drink in the words [of the storyteller] with eyes and mouths as well as ears.”²⁶⁵ Burton indeed sees himself as a vehicle for passing on

wonders to the English reader suggesting that he understands just what the English reader needs in order to replicate the sense of the original source language listener/reader.

“(5) Translation as a means through which the translator seeks to upgrade the status of the SL text because it is perceived as being on a lower cultural level.”²⁶⁶ On this point Burton exemplifies the *Nights* perhaps much more than they were ever thought of in the Middle East. Due to a lack of manuscripts, and a couple of mentions of the *Nights* in the 10th century by Al-Jabari and Mas’udi in which they write disparagingly of the story collection, it is widely accepted that the *Nights* were a sort of crude literature unpopular at the time in any literary circles. This is a point not only Burton, but also his predecessors including Galland, address directly. Burton idealizes the *Nights* in a sense, and in his introduction on the more possible controversial sections, he suggests that the crudeness of the stories are vital to reading them in an English translation. He promises to bridge that gap between crudeness and class as best he can, “preserving...all possible delicacy where the indecency is not intentional; and, as a friend advises me to state, not exaggerating the vulgarities and the indecencies.”²⁶⁷ By doing so Burton deliberately (however tongue-in-cheek he is being) situates the *Nights* as being a lesser text culturally, and yet his version will delicately resituate it into a higher level.

According then, to the general rules and abstract theories of translation and translation theory, Burton produced a fairly straightforward translation based on 19th century translation practices, despite what his later critics would say about it. The argument that his translation is “unreadable” also holds little water, despite Burton’s occasional flourishes with his English terms. Yes he antiquates some words, rhymes with a certain humorous strangeness and seems to have an obsession with overwriting

sexuality, yet it all combines to give a very Burtonesque take on the *Nights* that is quite readable. Burton's *Nights* provides a highly individualized character, something that every pre-Burton *Nights* has albeit with usually not so much obvious attention on the translator, by the translator. Haddawy's *Nights*, by situating itself against Burton, seems to have stripped itself of individuality, leaving instead a sort of dry representation of some kind of bare bones urtext. Certainly the notion of past translations of poor quality is not a new development in literary translation. The call for a newer better translation is the cornerstone of any literary translation and was indeed a major impetus for Burton himself, who drew particular aim at Lane. At once the author of a new translation places himself in the tradition of that original work and its fame and at the same time that author attempts to best the previous translations, setting the stage for what is hoped to be the sale of many copies. Despite this contentious aspect of translation, contemporary critics have charged Burton's edition with being "unreadable" and this general consensus has held about Burton to the extent that contemporary editions of the *Nights* like Haddawy's have been careful not to replicate Burton in any way.

The turn toward the political in literature and literary studies and toward the academic study of postcolonial theory in academia could well have been borne out of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a book whose effects have been as vast in academia as the *1001 Nights* are in literature. *Orientalism* has also insured that works like those of Burton's are forever examined first through some lens relating to postcolonial theory. In fact *Orientalism* bases much of its evidence not only on Burton as the epitome of what is wrong with Orientalists but also uses the European fascination with Burton's, Lane's and Galland's *Nights* as evidence to support its argument. Jamie James wrongly suggests that

Said “scarcely mentions ‘The Arabian Nights’”²⁶⁸ in *Orientalism*. In fact Said spends about a third of his book using *Nights* related authors and translators as the crux of his argument, Galland, Lane and Burton occupy a good portion of the first couple chapters of *Orientalism*. If we look at the charges that Said and those that follow him level at Burton in particular, however, we see that they are at once redundant and also create a sense of dismissive argumentation regarding such disparate fields as anthropology, science and literature that the accomplishments of Burton and other Orientalists are completely overshadowed by a revisionist view of them so much so that it becomes nearly impossible to understand how someone like Burton truly impacted the latter stages of the 19th century and beyond.

Richard Burton never concealed in his writings his notion of England as a superior nation/empire that needed to both cement her domination over the areas she possessed and ruled indirectly and expand to more of them as well. Dane Kennedy quotes Burton’s *Sindh and the Races That Inhabit the Valley of the Indus* where “Burton summarized his purpose in terms of ‘the popular axiom, ‘knowledge is power’” adding Burton to the list of 19th century Orientalists who “never doubted that the colonial state would benefit from their Orientalist interests.”²⁶⁹ Burton also notably begins his *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah* by outlining his initial colonialist intentions which primarily included mapping the unmapped Arabian Peninsula in an East to West direction for the English government. He is also typically upfront with his other intentions: “I was desirous to find out if any market for horses could be opened between Central Arabia and India” and “to inquire into the hydrography of the Hijaz...and the existence or non-existence of perennial streams” and also to study

ethnography, to see if there is a problem with the prevailing Western notion of one “common origin of the Arab family.”²⁷⁰ The main reasons were distinctly and upfront colonial reasons; the trip and his writing about it would benefit England first, or to further his own colonially related career. This is how Burton always wrote about other cultures and was his primary focus throughout his writing. In his *Nights* as well, Burton is upfront about his colonial views, stating that English colonists of the Muslim world would benefit from knowing more about it, warning that England’s “crass ignorance concerning the Oriental peoples which should most interest her, exposes her to the contempt of Europe as well as of the Eastern world.”²⁷¹ His intent is clear here: in order to be a more effective colonial power, England needs to adapt to the nuances of those she rules. A step toward that adaptation, he implies, is also part of his salesmanship: his version of the *Nights* directly benefits the colonial project.

Burton’s intents in *Pilgrimage* were also steeped in a particularly overt colonial matrix: business opportunities, potential uses of land for future acquisition, and the remapping and census taking of ethnic diversity for Western scientific achievement. The project as outlined above is straightforwardly colonial. Using Benedict Anderson’s terminology to outline it they could easily fit into the categories of “census,” “mapping” and what he calls the “museum.” These elements, Anderson suggests in *Imagined Communities*, “illuminate the late colonial state’s style of thinking about its domain. The ‘warp’ of this thinking was a totalizing classificatory grid, which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state’s real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments, and so forth.”²⁷² This project of classification was approved and backed by what Anderson calls “bureaucratic producers”

and made more clear by Burton, who, as an individual explorer on the ground operating with these bureaucratic eyes fulfilled Anderson's "task of, as it were, 'filling in the boxes.'"²⁷³ Burton had at the forefront of his goal the information of the "other" to be used for specifically colonial purposes and even Anderson's classification feels like a restatement from Burton himself.

It seems redundant then, to suggest, as Edward Said does, that Burton did have those elements in his writing. The particular nuances behind Burton are slowly being looked at in contemporary rewritings, however. In his book *The Highly Civilized Man* Dane Kennedy spends much of his chapter "The Orientalist" on the dual nature of Burton and how Burton goes even further than the typical Orientalist/Colonialist by suggesting that England could and should learn from the cultures, races and the customs of her colonies. But it is Edward Said who most influentially uses Burton as an example of someone engaged in a sort of subversive colonial project as one who may appear to be sympathetic but at the same time is unable to escape his colonial project no matter how far Burton can push the subversion. "Orientalism, which is the system of European or Western knowledge about the Orient, thus becomes synonymous with European domination of the Orient, and this domination effectively overrules even the eccentricities of Burton's personal style,"²⁷⁴ Said writes, perhaps again, like Anderson, just restating what Burton himself had already stated clearly. In this quote Said perhaps gives Burton too much credit for being "eccentric," Burton was clearly attempting to further "European domination of the Orient," it was never something he tried to hide or diminish, even within his admiration for the people, culture and religion of the Middle East and India.

The debate over the worthiness of Said's arguments or postcolonial studies in general is still far from being answered today and certainly outside the scope of this chapter. What is clear from this little bit of evidence, however, is that Said is directly engaged with rewriting Burton, but what he does with Burton is almost a restatement of Burton himself and what later critics of Burton do, using Said, is to dismiss Burton entirely and rewrite Burton's importance. It is a tendency toward dismissing works like Burton's entirely because they are situated within a colonialist frame of mind and historical state. By entirely I mean this tendency has colored every writing not only on Burton, but as outlined in Chapter Two, also on the *Nights* itself, Haddawy's careful anti-literary approach to his own translation, largely due to Burton, evidence itself. It is a tendency to not only investigate colonialist mentalities through the study of literature and history under the postcolonial framework, but to color this investigation within a necessary binary hierarchy which ultimately negates works like Burton's as being not only un-authoritative but also unworthy of attention at all.

Edward Said backs away somewhat from the dismissive aspects of *Orientalism* in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) by suggesting that looking at English literature, history, culture and its essential imperial elements and by examining these connections "actually and truly *enhances* our reading and understanding of them"²⁷⁵ rather than diminishing their value. In this regard the "domination" that Said suggested about Burton in *Orientalism* becomes more complicated and more along the lines of what Said later suggests in *Culture and Imperialism* as "a network of interdependent histories that it would be inaccurate and senseless to repress, useful and interesting to understand."²⁷⁶ While this might seem to be a more nuanced approach to postcolonial theory and

Orientalism the idea of studying the text at hand instead of dismissing it has not seem to have taken hold at all. Instead of “enhancing” a reading of Burton, however, in 20th century criticism of him, what has happened is an erasing and dismissal of Burton entirely.

Not only is Burton dismissed for his political views but the literature that he handled, or mishandled as his critics would have it, needed to be rewritten in order to erase the damage that Burton caused to it. The *1001 Nights*, in particular, has become a part of this debate and has turned into a sullied piece of literature that needs to be restored to its original state, which, we have seen, is a problematic if not impossible task. While admitting the *Nights* has a varied and diverse background, Haddawy unites the cultural focus of the story collection “under Islamic hegemony” which is collected under the umbrella of “the cultural and artistic history of Islam”²⁷⁷ despite the G-manuscript’s sexually charged, a-religious moralities. Haddawy, like Burton, suggests that the need for his version comes from a failure of past translations to truly convey the *cultural* information that is necessary in his opinion for a faithful translation of the *Nights*. Burton, Lane, Payne and other past translators according to Haddawy missed essential qualities of the target text because they were not “someone who reads, writes, and speaks Arabic like a native.”²⁷⁸ Instead these translators dropped words they could not translate, mistranslated others, or they used faulty versions and manuscripts that unscrupulous Arabic scribes had later amended. The past “translators, by adhering to such sources, deviate not only from the letter but also the spirit of the original, particularly since the letter and the spirit are often inextricable.”²⁷⁹ Haddawy suggests that the mishandling of past translators was done in primarily cultural ignorance and in doing so they

misrepresent what the *Nights* truly is. As such, Haddawy actually continues the tradition, began in the early 19th century, of Orientalizing the *Nights*, insisting that they are vehicles for truthful cultural information, and not, as the G-manuscript is, fictional humorous fantasy stories with an ultimately controversial sexual morality.

What is problematic about comparing the different versions of the *Nights* under one cultural umbrella is manifold: Burton's presentation of the target culture to Imperial Britain vs. Haddawy's presentation of the target culture to the English reader of the 20th century outline two different ideas that are tied specifically to two different times and places. What can be deduced from comparing them and their cultural intentions, however, is that the idea of culture is at the forefront of why both of them chose to write their respective translations. What this similarity points to in Haddawy and Mahdi, when they compare themselves to Burton, however, is that Haddawy and Mahdi seem to be giving themselves the task of reclaiming the knowledge of the culture from Burton. Given that the notion of the literary qualities of the translations is unimportant on some levels to Haddawy the reason and point of the need for his translation becomes outlined in these cultural contexts. Haddawy's version only can operate as a "true" version of the *Nights* in this context – Haddawy's is more faithful to the cultural transmission within the translation than Burton. Haddawy's *Nights* become not a literary text but an active act of cultural reclamation.

Instead of reading or studying Burton's *Nights*, even under the aegis of Edward Said in order to "enhance" the understanding or complexities of them, however, what Haddawy is doing is essentially erasing Burton's *Nights*, and their misrepresentations of the Middle East, and replacing them with something else that he seems to see is a more

truthful cultural representation, and in doing so is operating within this dismissive framework of 20th century Burton criticism.

Burton's pre-20th century criticism would still find a hold in writing on him for some time during the mid-20th century. Representative pieces include Jonathan Bishop's article "The Identities of Sir Richard Burton: The Explorer as Actor" (1957) in which the author critiques Burton on the audacity of the explorer to be expected to have his authority taken seriously while engaging in subversive activities. "Burton wished to be 'Ruffian Dick' and at the same time be loved by the world he shocked; and his obstinate inability to see how such immaturity might disgust the world is part of his flaw."²⁸⁰ In a later review of the republishing of several Burton's books and biographies ME Bradford suggests that Burton's scandalous background be stricken from contemporary imaginings of the man and instead people should focus on the texts he produced, on their own merits. The scandals Bradford mentions, however, are those in which Burton the rebel against Victorianism, his "obnoxious and sermonic hostility to men of his class and outlook"²⁸¹ is still the issue. It also seems that the "reassessment"²⁸² Bradford called for never would take place, instead a new critical view of Burton would replace any contention over his rebelliousness against Victorianism.

During the late 1960s academia in the West changed, however, and criticism of Burton started to take on an offensive rather than defensive tone. Critics began dismissing Burton's entire collection of writing and his authority because of his association with the English Empire. In a 1969 article Ali A. Mazrui calls Burton and Speke's discovery and mapping of the Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria region nothing more than seeing "something which generations of Africans before had seen and

touched and utilised”²⁸³ and asks the question of the men: “were they discoverers or darkeners of Africa?”²⁸⁴ In 1972 Michael Adas grouped Burton into a collection of European explorers who misrepresented what they saw in order to justify their colonialist ambitions: “A belief in the decadence or barbarism of the traditional regime was essential to those who saw imperial expansion as the God-given duty of a superior white or European ‘race.’”²⁸⁵ Both articles are representative of a general turn in Burton criticism toward not only considering Burton within his colonial framework as a means to “enhance” one’s understanding of the complicated situation but rather an attempt to do away with any authority or relevance that Burton may have once had including on such nonpolitical seeming elements as geography.

An apt example of the far reaches of this type of dismissive criticism of not only Burton but of any and all European Orientalists is the article “Cairo Curiosities” by Barbara Harlow (1985), in which she focuses on Edward Lane. The article describes how Lane befriended Egyptian scholar Ahmad Amin and how this friendship led to Amin writing a colonial-friendly Arabic dictionary which was widely used at the time and beyond. Lane’s reach spread throughout Egyptian culture and into its dictionaries and literature and language, according to Harlow, long after the English had left the country. “Colonial pressure and imperialist intervention had brought about a disordering of the traditional literary and social structures.”²⁸⁶ The implication is that even the Egyptians were a part of this project and both them and Lane and all Imperial designs and doings in Egypt therefore, even a dictionary of Arabic, are not only suspect but should be erased and reconsidered entirely somehow.

This dismissal has only increased over time, perhaps finding its most accepted and authoritative voice in *Orientalism*, in which Said outlines the complexities, positive ambitions, and relativistic outlook of Burton which all must still be compressed to one overarching message: that of the West's domination of the East. This message, Said suggests, permeates everything Burton wrote (although Said only mentions *Pilgrimage* and Burton's footnotes and Terminal Essay in the *Nights*). This view forever enmeshes Burton in a postcolonial biography, one which "elevates Burton's consciousness to a position of supremacy over the Orient. In that position his individuality perforce encounters, and indeed merges with, the voice of Empire."²⁸⁷ Anything, Said is suggesting that may be said by Burton about the East is tainted. In fact Said uses the word "every" several times when discussing Burton. "Every scene in the *Pilgrimage* reveals him as winning out over the obstacles confronting him."²⁸⁸ "Every one of Burton's footnotes... was meant to be testimony to his victory over the sometimes scandalous system of Oriental knowledge."²⁸⁹ "All of his vast knowledge about the Orient, which dots every page he wrote, reveals that he knew that the Orient in general and Islam in particular were systems of information."²⁹⁰ Said's rereading of Burton seems not to be an investigation into Burton's ideas per se, but rather a very clear dismissal of Burton as a conquering colonialist, someone who saw systems of knowledge around him which he only used to triumphantly vanquish. As such, anything Burton said, "every page he wrote," was to be read with suspicion, if it was to be read at all. The dismissal of Burton's authority has only increased over time with Burton becoming the representative of the evils of colonialism and anything Burton did, wrote or said is not to be taken with any sort of value except as an example of the negative aspects of the

colonial era. This dismissal seems ironic, as this Chapter makes clear, because Burton indeed was these things, very openly, self-consciously and very clearly.

Writing in 1986 Rana Kabbani suggests that “Burton’s notes to the *Arabian Nights* throw light on the evolution of Victorian anthropology” which, she says, “was predominantly a system for the hierarchical classification of race. As such, it was inextricably linked to the functionings of empire,”²⁹¹ again reiterating ideas Burton himself often stated outright. Paroma Roy suggests that Burton’s ability to imitate other cultures was in fact evidence of the strength of the colonial enterprise which backed him. Using Homi Bhabha’s notion of mimicry she suggests that “Burton’s easy transition between varied identities underwrites imperialism’s avowal of faith in a stable and coherent colonial self that can resist the potential pollutions of this trafficking in native identity”²⁹² essentially marking Burton as only a representative of colonial England and its mentality despite how “far” his disguises went or how often he was critiqued for “going native” by his own people. In addition, Dane Kennedy notes a 2000 book called *Out of Our Minds: Reason and Madness in the Exploration of Central Africa* by Johannes Fabian in which Fabian suggests that Burton’s notes should be looked at with suspicion because the traveler was either frequently sick or on drugs. “The fevers they [Burton and Speke] endured and the alcohol, opiates, and quinine they consumed to treat their symptoms worked together to undermine their sense of objectivity and rationality.”²⁹³ Burton and his fellow 19th century explorers *must* have something wrong with them, these contemporary critics are insisting, including being so out of his mind on drugs what he saw or thought he saw were severe distortions of reality. Burton and all that he wrote and did has become not only the colonial entity to which he himself often

admitted to being but also a figure whose legacy has largely been dismissed and discredited by contemporary academia because of his association with the English Empire and its project.

In his book *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World* (2005) historian Dane Kennedy takes a look at many of the criticisms of Richard Burton leveled at the explorer in the later 20th century and argues that while Burton was in some ways many of the things people have charged him with being (“racist,” “Imperialist,” etc.) he also opened the doors for relativity in cultural, racial and sexual matters, moving away from Victorianism and toward a more Modern relativistic conception of the world. In doing so Kennedy suggests that Burton was a catalyst of sorts for this historical shift because of his own idiosyncratic beliefs and interests which seemed to confront English Victorian conservatism and 19th century ideas of certainty head on. This revisionist approach suggests an advance in the outlook on Burton away from dismissing him entirely and instead confronting the critiques of Burton and suggesting that it was more complex of an issue than previously thought.

Kennedy’s book divides characteristics of Burton’s lives into chapters with titles such as “The Racist,” and “The Sexologist.” In these chapters Kennedy explores the criticisms of Burton vis-à-vis each focus of the chapter generally agreeing with the assessment of the critique. Where Kennedy goes further, however, is by exploring the possibility of Burton being more of a relativist than his outwardly binary-seeming personality would suggest. In “The Racist,” for example, the book explores several of Burton’s writings on Africans and others, which clearly show signs of a hierarchical system of racial classification based on loose categories. Of the Africans, Kennedy states

that Burton “gave venomous descriptions of their appearance, referring to them as ‘hideous’ and ‘bestial.’ He drew metaphorical associations between Africans and apes...asserting ‘the quasi-gorillahood of the real ‘nigger.’”²⁹⁴ Later in the chapter Kennedy explores some of Burton’s more racially relativistic writings which suggest another viewpoint that may not be so binary, however. In writing of the possibility of the British interfering in or banning the practice of human sacrifice in Dahomey, for example, Kennedy quotes Burton as taking sides with the king of Dahomey whose subjects “would deem it impious were he to curtail or to omit the performance of [human sacrifice], and suddenly to suppress it would be as if a European monarch were forcibly to abolish prayers for the dead.”²⁹⁵

While Kennedy’s book is a solid account of the various complexities inherent in the figure of Burton, Kennedy relies on evidence and charges leveled against Burton that spans a long swath of history. This shifting temporality creates an assemblage of time periods which may have little to do with each other contextually. In the racism chapter, for example, Kennedy relies on the contemporary reader’s understanding of racism, and of what it is, in order to make his claims that Burton was a racist to begin with. These claims, however, would have had much less of an impact were they to be suggested during Burton’s lifetime, a time period when anthropology and exploration were done with a very specific and hierarchical outlook, particularly at the hands of the English. To make his argument Kennedy insists on the label “racist” (and its contemporary negative connotations) in order to outline the problems with Burton. And yet at the time the scientific study of race based on this hierarchy was not only common but widely accepted in England and Europe and the term “racism” was not even used until the 20th century.

Robert Miles writes that “Critics of scientific theories of ‘race’ prior to this decade did not use a concept of racism to identify their ideological object.”²⁹⁶ Miles also writes that in 19th century Europe ideas about classification of racial identities both within nations and outside of their borders were widespread, people not only started considering themselves to be a part of a certain racial group, “but they also identified a hierarchy of ‘races’ within Europe.”²⁹⁷ Also, Burton was a part of the legitimately accepted general English attitude toward race and difference. “In 1863 [Burton] helped to found the Anthropological Society of London and shape its reputation as the leading forum for scientific racism in Britain”²⁹⁸ leading to the institution’s growth as one of the major anthropological societies in the West. Not only were Burton’s more controversial views on race widely shared in England they weren’t necessarily seen as “racist” in contemporary terms and weren’t generally seen as being controversial in terms of contemporary understandings of racism. Of Burton at this time Mary Lovell writes, “his contemporaries did not call him a bigot, nor a racist, because his views were not perceived as being such.”²⁹⁹

Kennedy also relies on criticism written at different time periods in order to make his argument, quoting and referring to such temporally and ideologically disparate voices as Homi Bhaba,³⁰⁰ Edward Said,³⁰¹ Algernon Swinburne³⁰² and Rana Kabbani³⁰³ without necessarily taking their historically situated contexts into account. In doing so Kennedy sets up his argument not as being based on one particular time period but rather mixes the criticisms of Burton throughout the different time periods. The book compares 19th century outrage by the *Edinburgh Review* and Charles Doughty over Burton impersonating a Muslim in his pilgrimage to Mecca because of his “betrayal” to the

Christian Englishman he was supposed to represent³⁰⁴ to 20th century (hesitant) acceptance of Burton's authority as an impersonator by Edward Said³⁰⁵ and later 20th century post-colonial criticism by Parama Roy.³⁰⁶ While all critiques centered on Burton's impersonation of Muslims and of various Eastern peoples the different time periods are too contextually rigid to effectively harness into one mass argument. And while Kennedy's arguments are well founded and are given solid evidence to back them up a further investigation based on Kennedy's work would reveal even more if it concentrated on historical context as well.

In addition several of Kennedy's chapters are inherently time period specific. The racism chapter, for example, relies entirely upon a specific viewpoint contemporaneously agreed upon in the 20th century looking back at the 19th century when such a term as we understand it did not exist. Burton's sexual explorations and their subsequent controversies are explored in the chapter "The Sexologist" and yet most of this chapter relies specifically on 19th century reactions to Burton's over-sexuality where Burton's sexuality to 20th or 21st century critics wouldn't be as controversial. His chapter "The Orientalist" revolves around both 19th century conceptions of Orientalism in England and combines 20th century re-conceptions of what Orientalism was by postcolonial theorists like Edward Said and those that followed in Said's wake. By doing so Kennedy risks generalizing the myriad disparate reasons for the criticisms leveled at Burton into one convenient overarching argument rather than tying them to their specific time periods and seeing how those time periods differed and what those temporal differences suggest about Burton. Kennedy's work marks a turn toward a more nuanced and complex understanding of Burton and the time period he lived and worked within that clearly

shows a positive break from 20th century dismissive criticism. By situating his work and Burton into historical contexts as I've suggested an even clearer perspective may be possible.

Burton scandalized people with his overuse and emphasis on sexuality, and it is a kind of sexuality unlike the G-manuscript in its reworked moralizing on how women were not to be trusted sexually. By doing this Burton not only resituated the *Nights* further from Scheherazade's sexual morality outlined in Chapter One, but he also refocused the attention of people onto the inherent sexuality of the stories of the *Nights*, something uncomfortably dealt with by most. Perhaps there is much to take issue with on today's terms with Burton's racialized sexuality, his theories of the Sotadic zone, and his insistence on the infidelities of all women. At the same time there is a sort of wryly written humor in Burton's audacity, one which while saying extraordinary things, still points to their ludicrous possibilities, highlighting the humor of the *Nights* itself and casting doubt on whether Burton wasn't having some fun with the serious reflections on his anthropological observations that others may have been taking away from their readings. On page 6 of his *Nights*, the beginning to his 16 volume set, he writes in a footnote: "Debauched women prefer negroes on account of the size of their parts... In my time no honest Hindi Moslem would take his women-folk to Zanzibar on account of the huge attractions and enormous temptations there." On page 7 a footnote amended to the line about the unfaithfulness of women, proved by Shahzaman's wife, "showeth that they all do it" writes that "The very same words were lately spoken in England proving the eternal truth of The Nights which the ignorant call 'downright lies.'"³⁰⁷ Burton certainly concentrates on a reading of the *Nights* which posits Scheherazade as a pure and faithful

woman committed to her husband, something, given the G-manuscript frame of the story, that is impossible. Burton insists on a patriarchal reading of the *Nights*, one that contrasts with my own reading in Chapter One. Still, his overemphasis on the sexual nature of the *Nights*, and all of his additional, sexually related notes, seem somehow to carry on Scheherazade's morality, if not reinvigorate its possibility. In fact, it might be Burton's sexualization of the *Nights* that really drew the critic's attention, and their other concerns about politics, colonialism, racism or poor translations were secondary. Irwin writes that "Above all, Burton believed himself to be an expert on sex,"³⁰⁸ and that "Sexual obsession and racism often came together in Burton's would-be scientific footnotes."³⁰⁹ Versions such as those by Lyons, Dawood and Haddawy, which, in their introductions, definitively situate themselves against Burton, are also decidedly less sexual in their narratives, perhaps fearing that a sexualized *Nights* is a less truthful version of what the *Nights* are about.

This move away from a sexual *Nights* has its roots in the European translators like Galland and Lane, who first presented the *Nights* in a much less sexual form. Its Arabic G-manuscript, as I've shown, is primarily sexual, and in fact its later Arabic incarnations, notably the version known as "Bulaq" from Cairo, printed by the Egyptian government in 1835, retains and also highlights the sexual nature of the *Nights*. In 2010 the Egyptian government issued a "heritage" republication of the *Nights* and a conservative Islamic group immediately called for a ban on the book and for its publisher to be jailed. The Egyptian courts eventually threw out the lawsuit; however, it made international news. There seemed to generally be, both in Egypt and internationally, an outrage against this conservative group, with the notion behind the outrage being a sort of "how could they"

ban such a well-known folk collection with innocent stories like “Ali Baba.”³¹⁰ Because I was posting about the issue on my blog, *The Journal of the 1001 Nights*, I was interviewed about it on Colombian National Radio. I felt like the interviewer was pressing me to say something about the censorious nature of the Islamists, asking me “What are those things that could be uncomfortable and offensive for the Islamic culture?” My answer had less to do with the offense of the group, and more to do with what every person who reads the *Nights* confronts, it is a collection of stories with an explicitly sexual nature, potentially offensive not just to Islamists, but to any conservative reader who finds the sexual permissiveness and morality of the text. I answered: “I think I could see it being offensive to a lot of people, not just Islamic lawyers.”³¹¹ It is the strange general truth about the *Nights* that people insist on a romantic, non-sexual, Orientalized vision of the story collection to this day. Reasons why are beyond the scope of this dissertation as it stands, but an investigation into European Orientalism’s lengthy history of promoting this vision of the *Nights* might be fruitful to look into. Regardless, Scheherazade’s morality seems to survive all sorts of attempts to hide it, from outright bans to censoring to rewriting the meaning of its sexuality as Burton has done. By studying one particular version and its relationship to its author/translator, as I’ve done in this chapter, and the variety of responses to it, and the effects of critical scholarship on it, the benefits of isolating each specific version of the *Nights*, and measuring its relationship to the G-manuscript’s inherent moral message, are, I think, highlighted and reiterated. By restoring Burton’s influential text to its rightful place as a very temporally specific book with its own unique set of interactions with others, this chapter has shown the

potential for a clearer understanding of what his *Nights* were to those who read them, when they read them.

The dismissing of Burton is problematic on many levels because it obscures the role that his works played in history. Rewriting Burton rewrites history to such an extent that it becomes something else. When a text without any clear origin like the *Arabian Nights* is added to this situation it becomes even more unclear. Any brief study, such as the one outlined in the next chapter, one involving James Joyce's use of the *Nights* becomes additionally problematic because of the rewriting of both Burton and of the *Nights* by contemporary scholarship. To read Burton and his *Nights* only through the lens of his colonial intentions is not to necessarily read them as Joyce read them, for example, and to claim that the only way to see the *Nights* is through a Saidian *Orientalism* framework is to obscure the past in a 20th century veneer, let alone misdiagnose most versions of the *Nights* of the 18th century.

By dismissing Burton's authority, academics are witnessing essentially the erasure of key anthropologic and geographic texts which not only inform our understanding of 19th century English Empire thought, and its limitations, but also inform our understanding of the levels to which anthropology was willing to go in order to search for a "true" representation of what it saw. When these attempts are dismissed and re-colored in order to further some political agenda on the part of the author/scholar it becomes something else entirely, less of a Victorian era primary text and more of a contemporary Western re-imagining of the past, and outlines the limitations and theoretical fictions of that outlook which largely exists in speculation. Those approaching texts like Burton's, whether fiction or non-fiction, are forced first to view

them in an anxious space as tainted works of doubtful worth. The truth is, however, that they were seen in the 19th and early 20th century as being quite worth of respect, and seen as containing many truths never before seen or understood. A clear understanding of this differentiation would lead to a more nuanced view of not only the colonial apparatus, but of this type of thinking generally at that time period.

This isn't to say one should replace being dismissive with accepting everything Burton did and said - that would also be an impossible task of taking temporally specific events and transplanting them into time periods they couldn't function in. What I'm attempting is to gain a clear grasp of Burton on 19th century foundations, in order to study how he and his works influenced those that followed him, and were influenced by those that came before him. If I were to dismiss him because he considered England to be superior I would be dismissing most 19th century English history as well, and obscuring the role that England played, and thought she played, in shaping the 19th century global arena.

By dismissing Burton's *Nights* and, as Haddawy and others have attempted to do, by rewriting and erasing it from history, literary historians are left with more speculation and more unfounded generalizations. Burton's *Nights*, for all of their faults, were a revitalization of the story collection on a level that they had never before reached. Much of this came because of Burton himself, and almost had little to do with the actual text of his *Nights* – a pastiche of Payne, Lane and several other versions of the *Nights* – itself. Burton's *Nights*' notoriety, fame, difficulty and scandal were unprecedented – no previous version had ever met with a similar response – and they changed the way in which the *Nights* were viewed by the world in many distinctive ways. To dismiss

Burton's *Nights* is to dismiss an important part of the development of English literature, including aspects of the movement between Victorian literature and modernist literature of the early 20th century. To discount his work largely on either spurious translation/style reasons or for more political reasons is to rewrite an important part of the development of Western literature.

The nature of the *1001 Nights* is such that each version deserves individual attention and yet no serious or lengthy scholarship besides maybe Mahdi's study of Galland's manuscript has been undertaken to do this. Instead, books, articles and scholarship offer generalized understandings of the *Nights* that obscure its important individual versions. Books and articles suggesting the "influence" of the *Nights* on something as grandiose a scale as "English literature" should be met with skepticism: what version of the *Nights*? What period of literature? Which author read which versions when? Etc. Until these questions are seriously considered there will be a large blank spot on scholarship involving the *Nights*. And until the obscuring of the past diminishes and the complexities that Edward Said were hoping to reveal by understanding that past are truly studied for and what they are, that blank spot will remain.

²¹⁹ Burton, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night Volume One*, (USA: The Burton Club, n.d), xiv.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, xx.

²²¹ See Mary Lovell, *A Rage to Live*, (New York: WW Norton, 1998), for a more in-depth examination of the events in this paragraph, and for additional bibliographic information on Burton.

²²² Lovell, *A Rage to Live: A Biography of Richard and Isabel Burton*, (New York: WW Norton, 1998), 496.

- ²²³ “Art. III,” Rev. of *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Meccah*, by Richard F. Burton, *The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, (London: Longman, 1856), 390.
- ²²⁴ Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005), 238.
- ²²⁵ *The Arabian Nights: Tales of 1001 Nights*, Volume 1, Translated by Malcolm C. Lyons (London: Penguin, 2008), vii.
- ²²⁶ *Arabian Nights, The*, Translated by Husain Haddawy, (New York: Knopf, 1990), xxvi.
- ²²⁷ Dawood, *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights*, (London: Penguin, 1954), 9-10.
- ²²⁸ James, Jamie. “Old Tales That Still Seduce: Western culture owes a debt to the ‘Arabian Nights.’” *The Wall Street Journal Online*, 30 Aug 2009. 30 Aug 2009 <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204886304574308744212027048.html>>
- ²²⁹ Mikics, “Seduction Unending,” Review of *Whatever Gets You Through the Night: A Story of Sheherezade and the Arabian Entertainments* by Andrei Codrescu, July 25, 2011, *the Book: An Online Review at The New Republic*, <http://www.tnr.com/book/review/andrei-codrescu-arabian-nights-sheherezade?page=0,1>
- ²³⁰ Knipp, “*The Arabian Nights* in England: Galland's Translation and Its Successors,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 5 (1974), 46.
- ²³¹ *Translation/History/Culture: A Sourcebook*, edited by Susan Bassnett and Andre Lefevere, (London: Routledge, 1992), xi.
- ²³² Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, (New York: IB Tauris, 2005), 59.
- ²³³ Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” *Illuminations*, Translated by Harry Zohn, (New York: Schocken, 1968), 76.
- ²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.
- ²³⁵ Burton, xii (see n. 1).
- ²³⁶ *Ibid.*, xiv.
- ²³⁷ Benjamin, 79 (see n. 15).
- ²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.
- ²³⁹ See relevant sections in Lovell (see n. 3) or Irwin (see n. 14) for one of many overviews of Burton's use of Payne.
- ²⁴⁰ Burton, 12 (see n. 1).
- ²⁴¹ Haddawy, xix (see n. 8).
- ²⁴² *Ibid.*, xxv.
- ²⁴³ *Ibid.*, xxx.
- ²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxi.
- ²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴⁶ *The Thousand and One Nights (Alf Layla wa-Layla): From the Earliest Known Sources, Volume 3*, Muhsin Mahdi, ed., (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1984), 23.
- ²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Volume 2, 66.
- ²⁴⁸ Haddawy, 11 (see n. 8).
- ²⁴⁹ Burton, 14-15 (see n. 1).
- ²⁵⁰ Haddawy, 53-4 (see n. 8).

- ²⁵¹ Burton, 68 (see n. 1).
- ²⁵² Alessandra Riccardi, "Translation and Interpretation," *Translation Studies: perspectives on an emerging discipline*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 87.
- ²⁵³ *The Translation Studies Reader*, edited by Lawrence Venuti, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 221.
- ²⁵⁴ Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Translation Studies*, (London: Methuen, 1980), 71.
- ²⁵⁵ Burton, x (see n. 1).
- ²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.
- ²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, vi.
- ²⁵⁸ Bassnett-McGuire, 71 (see n. 37).
- ²⁵⁹ Burton, xx (see n. 1).
- ²⁶⁰ Bassnett-McGuire, 71 (see n. 37).
- ²⁶¹ Burton, xvii (see n. 1).
- ²⁶² *Ibid.*, xvi.
- ²⁶³ Bassnett-McGuire, 71 (see n. 37).
- ²⁶⁴ Burton, vii (see n. 1).
- ²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, viii.
- ²⁶⁶ Bassnett-McGuire, 71 (see n. 37).
- ²⁶⁷ Burton, xiv (see n. 1).
- ²⁶⁸ James, "Old Tales that Still Seduce: Western culture owes a debt to 'The Arabian Nights,'" *The Wall Street Journal: Masterpiece*, August 30, 2009, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204886304574308744212027048.html>
- ²⁶⁹ Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005), 27.
- ²⁷⁰ Burton, *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah*, Vol. 1, (New York: Dover, 1964), 3.
- ²⁷¹ Burton, xx (see n. 1).
- ²⁷² Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (New York: Verso, 1983), 184.
- ²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 173.
- ²⁷⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Vintage, 1978), 197.
- ²⁷⁵ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Vintage, 1994), xiv.
- ²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.
- ²⁷⁷ Haddawy, xv (see n. 8).
- ²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, xxi.
- ²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, xxv.
- ²⁸⁰ Bishop, "The Identities of Sir Richard Burton: The Explorer as Actor," *Victorian Studies* 1 (1957), 124.
- ²⁸¹ Bradford, Rev. of *The City of the Saints* by Richard F. Burton and *Burton: A Biography of Sir Richard Francis Burton* by Byron Farwell, *The Sewanee Review*, Vol. 72, No. 4, Autumn, 1964, 724.
- ²⁸² *Ibid.*
- ²⁸³ Mazrui, "European Exploration and Africa's Self-Discovery," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 7 (1969), 663.
- ²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 667.

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- ²⁸⁵ Adas, "Imperialist Rhetoric and Modern Historiography: The Case of Lower Burma before and after Conquest," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 3 (1972), 176.
- ²⁸⁶ Harlow, "Cairo Curiosities: E. W. Lane's Account, and Ahmad Amin's Dictionary," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46 (1985), 285.
- ²⁸⁷ Said, 196 (see n. 57).
- ²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 195.
- ²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.
- ²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 195.
- ²⁹¹ Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of Orient*, (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986), 62.
- ²⁹² Roy, "Oriental Exhibits: Englishmen and Natives in Burton's Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah & Meccah," *boundary 2* 22 (1995), 197.
- ²⁹³ Kennedy, 109 (see n. 52).
- ²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 133-4.
- ²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 151-2.
- ²⁹⁶ Robert Miles, *Racism*, (London: Routledge, 1989), 42.
- ²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.
- ²⁹⁸ Kennedy, 134 (see n. 52).
- ²⁹⁹ Lovell, 386 (see n. 3).
- ³⁰⁰ Kennedy, 68 (see n. 52).
- ³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ³⁰² *Ibid.*, 168.
- ³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 225.
- ³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.
- ³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁰⁷ Burton, Vol 1, 7.
- ³⁰⁸ Irwin, 33.
- ³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.
- ³¹⁰ For an overview of this case and links to and excerpts from news articles see the label "egypt" on *The Journal of the 1001 Nights* online.
- ³¹¹ For a link to the interview online see: "Banned in Egypt – Colombian National Radio," *The Journal of the 1001 Nights*, May 21, 2010, <http://journalofthenights.blogspot.com/2010/05/banned-in-egypt-colombian-national.html>

Irish Nights Entertainments: Ulysses and The 1001 Nights

James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1918-1920) is perhaps the exemplary novel of intertextual referents and needs little introduction regarding its uses and reliance on literary allusions. Most Joyce scholarship tends to intersect with questions of what meanings are being revealed through an examination of Joyce's complex web of allusions. Due to its obsessive-seeming incorporation of referents, including several based on the *Nights*, *Ulysses* seems like a perfect object of study to test the major findings of this dissertation. In fact *Ulysses* is at once its own text and also a rewriting of the *Nights* – its own modernist version of the *Nights* based not on textual sources but on dramatic renderings of the *Nights* in English pantomimes. These findings include the usefulness of clarifying which specific version or versions of the *Nights* was used, examining the political implications of postcolonial elements without being dismissive of them, and the usefulness of potentially measuring the distance between *Nights*-versions and Scheherazade's G-manuscript morality. This chapter's findings are broadly situated in Vincent Cheng's work on political engagements of race and culture in Joyce: *Joyce, race, and empire* (1995). In his book Cheng writes that within Joyce's works exists "a dialogic locus for the many particular, historically based voices of the variant social discourses within the various levels of both hegemony and resistance."³¹² Cheng's book investigates Orientalism and race, particularly the focus Joyce repeatedly included in his work on problems of Irish identity and its intersection with the modern world in

Dubliners, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. Using this intersection this chapter explores ways in which postcolonial theory can interact with both race and the *Nights* in Joyce, revealing Joyce's very complex sense of identity and his own exchanges with postcolonial and Orientalist ideas of culture, race and identity. At the same time this chapter insists on an illumination regarding the *Nights* and its uses in Joyce that has, to this point, not been presented as clearly elsewhere. By first examining which *Nights* Joyce uses, then at how Joyce uses the *Nights* in *Ulysses*, a clearer understanding of Joyce's version of the *Nights* becomes clarified. It especially seems that Joyce was manipulating traditionally defined English-based Orientalist ideology via his use of the *Nights* to critique it and to demand that its "hegemony" be reduced on some level, yet to also address the inherent, and on some levels accepted, presence of it as well, via the main characters of *Ulysses*. By using the *Nights* in this manner Joyce critiques Orientalist ideology and the cultural representations at work in *Nights* related pantomimes, replacing it instead with an uncertain yet less romantic clarified form, replacing the other with a more universal, realist-based humanistic outlook. This revelation intersects with much of the findings of this dissertation by avoiding the necessarily binary, dismissive postcolonial approach to critiquing literature, and replacing it with a more complex vision of the intersection of power structures at work in the novel.

Most scholarship linking the influence of *The 1001 Nights* and James Joyce has been problematic due in large part to the uncertain origins and the variety of versions of the *Nights*. By looking at Joyce's use of the *Nights* in *Ulysses* it seems the author was limited to the stories of the *Nights* that were turned into pantomimes - popular stage comedy musicals in the UK - rather than any particular textual sources. In isolating this

particular manifestation of the *Nights* it becomes clear that Joyce is referencing the pantomime versions, and the pantomime form itself, not only of the *Nights*, but also, elsewhere in the book, of the closely related notions of the “Orient.” These references in Joyce function in order to undermine the notions of the Orient that, even in the ironic genre of the pantomime and the exoticized notions of the East in them, still purported to show some faithful representation of a culture, and this Joyce ultimately found problematic. The way Joyce approaches the satirical representations might be akin to what Said was calling for in Chapter Four, “a network of interdependent histories”³¹³ intertwined and at work even in satirical English popular culture.

It is important to specify which version of the *Nights* Joyce, or any author ideally, incorporates in each of his works because those specific versions each have their own very specific idiosyncratic elements. Aida Yared, for example, shows how Joyce borrows extensively from Burton in *Finnegans Wake*, not only from Burton’s translation of the *Nights* but also from Burton’s extensive essays interpolated into his collection, essays that don’t exist in any other version of the *Nights* and which are key ingredients to how Joyce is using them in *Finnegans Wake*. To say generally that Joyce was influenced by the *Nights* in this regard ignores how particular translations, or versions, specifically influenced the ways in which Joyce used them. Burton had a very idiosyncratic voice and message and it is this that Joyce incorporates, not just some general vagueness about the *Nights* and the Orient. Yared has shown that Joyce’s knowledge of the *Nights* pre-*Finnegans Wake* was somewhat limited. She suggests “that, early in his literary career, Joyce’s knowledge of the Arabian Nights derived from the numerous versions he encountered in print or pantomime.”³¹⁴ Due to the significant lack of any clear textual

references along with the great number of references to stock characters of the *Nights* in *Ulysses*, and with Joyce's clear use of the pantomime versions of *Sindbad* and *Aladdin*, it seems that most, if not all of the references to the *Nights* in *Ulysses*, derive solely from these pantomime versions. If he read a particular print version of the *Nights*, Joyce did not clearly include it in *Ulysses*, except for perhaps a mention of the Grub Street title *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, as outlined in this chapter. In addition it seems likely that Joyce incorporated stock ideas from general cultural knowledge of the *Nights* (such as Sinbad's journeys, Haroun Al-Rashid's wanderings through Baghdad or the frame stories of Scheherazade in Molly Bloom's soliloquy) but nothing that can be specifically or clearly linked to a print version of the *Nights* akin to Joyce's use of *The Odyssey* or *Hamlet*, both texts mentioned in *Ulysses* and whose textual narrative identities are also clearly found in the book as well. Given Joyce's careful and extensive use of Burton in *Finnegans Wake*, and the other multiple clear literary allusions specifically at work throughout *Ulysses*, it seems reasonable to suggest that he was relatively unfamiliar with a textual version of the *Nights* when he wrote *Ulysses*.

Other Joyce scholars have pointed to an influence of the *Nights* on Joyce but most are cursory mentions and almost none other than Aida Yared's study focus on which version, if any, Joyce used for his *Ulysses* references. Don Gifford's *Ulysses Annotated*, a fairly well regarded resource book which attempts to define most every reference Joyce makes in *Ulysses*, glosses over the *Nights* as if it were one work. Gifford incorrectly writes in note "16.1680 (659:28)," from the "Eumaeus" chapter of *Ulysses*, that "the stories were introduced into English in the first two decades of the nineteenth century" (yet they had been translated into English since 1706), and Gifford also later mentions

Burton's edition, calling it "a complete, unexpurgated translation,"³¹⁵ which, due to the note's placement in Gifford's book, suggestively ties Burton's edition incorrectly to *Ulysses*, as well as suggests, erroneously, that Burton translated a "complete" copy of the *Nights*, something which does not exist. Gifford does, however, also mention the *Nights* related pantomimes which Joyce references throughout *Ulysses* in notes "16.858 (636:33)," "15.283-84 (438:23)," and "17.421-23 (678:31-33)," which means on some level Gifford was aware of the variety of versions from the tales from the *Nights*. His reference book, however, is inadequate in its treatment of the *Nights* and its uses by Joyce. Weldon Thornton's *Allusions in Ulysses*, a similar reference book to Gifford, also incorrectly cites the *Nights*, suggesting "This famous medieval collection of tales in Arabic was first translated into English in 1840 by Edward William Lane (with some omissions), and then in complete, unexpurgated form by Sir Richard Burton in 1885-88."³¹⁶ Thornton further hides the *Nights* into an obscurative history, and does not aid in shedding light on questions of how Joyce was using the work in his book.

Other works by Joyce scholars on the *Nights* allude to the *Nights* but without going into detail about which specific version or versions Joyce was referencing. This lack of specificity problematically suggests that Joyce had some knowledge of an abstract textual *Nights*, which leads to an insufficient understanding of his uses and references to the *Nights*. Cheryl Herr's *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture*³¹⁷ is probably the best example of Joyce's uses of the pantomime in *Ulysses*, and she mentions the *Nights*-themed pantomimes Joyce used, but she doesn't go into detail about their *Nights*-related origins, nor does she mention the *Nights* as a source text much at all. While her use of the *Nights* is brief, and seemingly secondary to the point of her book, Herr's generalized treatment

of the relationship of the *Nights* to the pantomimes seems too cursory to be able to fully grasp Joyce's uses of his references in his work. Even if, as Herr points out, the pantomimes used their *Nights* references sparingly, such as the Gaiety-produced *Sindbad the Sailor* (1892) in which "ideological content having no overt relationship to *Sindbad's* story was easily woven into"³¹⁸ it, it still definitely had a *Nights* framework that was meaningful to Joyce. By not examining this framework, a significant amount of relational elements are left underdeveloped. In her Ph.D. Henriette Lazarides Power writes that Burton's *Nights* was something Joyce "read and kept in his library,"³¹⁹ and then spends much of her study on comparing Joyce's and Charles Dickens' use of the *Nights* generally, studying narrative parallels of the *Nights* and concentrating in particular on *Finnegans Wake* in her study of Joyce. She does dedicate a section to the pantomime connection of the *Nights* but does not investigate the specifics of those plays, writing "My interest here is not to explain Joyce's sources for these borrowings"³²⁰ of pantomimes in "Circe."

In the Winter and Spring 1998 *James Joyce Quarterly* issue "ReOrienting Joyce"³²¹ several essays mention the *Nights* as a source text for *Ulysses* but besides referring to the vague plotlines of the major *Nights*' stories (particularly "Sindbad") and their similarities with characters in *Ulysses*, the essays rarely rely on specific versions of the *Nights* as source texts for *Ulysses*. R. Brandon Kershner writes a brief overview of some of the major editions of the *Nights*, but does not specify which version if any Joyce used in *Ulysses*, writing that "the *Arabian Nights* provides a countertext for *Ulysses*," and that Stephen and Bloom probably "view their own experience in terms of the more famous eastern tales, especially 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves' and 'The Voyages of

Sindbad,”³²² instead of *The Odyssey*, on which the book is more obviously paralleled. Yet he does not ever specify which variant of the *Nights* operates in Joyce. Also in this issue, Zack Bowen examines, in particular, the use of the character “Haroun al Raschid” in *Ulysses*, but oversimplifies the *Nights* without specifying which version Joyce used for his references, and only generally writes about the historical figure al-Raschid. He writes that “Evidence of the impact of the *Thousand and One Nights* on the popular culture of the day was everywhere in the United Kingdom in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” including “importantly...their appearances in post-Christmas pantomimes.”³²³ While Bowen addresses the main variant of the *Nights* Joyce uses in *Ulysses*, he then spends most of his essay drawing comparisons to an unnamed textual version of the *Nights* and their Haroun related stories that seem to resonate with events in *Ulysses*, without mentioning much about the pantomimes at all. In her essay “‘Behind the Veil: James Joyce and the Colonial Harem,” Carol Loeb Shloss relates Bloom’s fantasy vision of his wife in the *Ulysses* chapter “Circe” to a version of the *Nights* with an introduction by Ben Ray Redman, tying Redman’s poetic imaginings of the *Nights* to Bloom’s imaginings of the Orient.³²⁴ The book she references, however, is a Modern Library 1932 version of Richard F. Burton’s *Nights*, with an introduction by Redman. This edition, published over a decade after *Ulysses*, and several after Burton first published his, while having a link to a poetic Orient, is definitely not related to the time period of the writing of *Ulysses*, however. While she does make clear that her “point here is not to claim an analogy between Joyce and any one of these artists or to demonstrate a line of influence,”³²⁵ it seems unfortunate because an investigation into which *Nights* Joyce was using would have certainly added to her essay on Orientalism and the harem in *Ulysses*.

Mary C. King uses the *Nights* in a general fashion to mean “Orientalism,” where in the chapter “Oxen” a “whore metamorphoses into an Arabian Nights manifestation of Britain’s oriental(ized) domains,”³²⁶ even though the *Nights* is not directly mentioned in the scene she quotes from. It seems important to discern which *Nights* Joyce consulted because Joyce’s use of the *Nights* in *Ulysses* is based primarily on its English/Irish pantomime form, rather than any clear version of the story collection itself, and as such has a very specific context at work in *Ulysses* than if the author had incorporated a textual variant.

Nights scholars have given James Joyce a cursory treatment as well, without delving too much into the specifics of how Joyce was influenced by the *Nights* and which versions he used. *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*’s entry on Joyce, without explicating any further details, reads: “In Joyce’s *Ulysses*, the parallels to the *Arabian Nights* are so striking that the Oriental collection is considered one of the ‘countertexts’ of *Ulysses*,”³²⁷ something Kershner³²⁸ also said generally in his Joycean take on the *Nights*. Robert Irwin’s *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*, a key text in *Nights* scholarship, links Burton’s translation with *Ulysses* by following the fact that Joyce owned a copy of Burton’s *Nights* with a passage on how *Ulysses* paralleled Sinbad’s stories, suggestively, though incorrectly, tying together Burton’s *Nights* with *Ulysses*. Irwin mentions a few of the *Nights* references in *Ulysses*, although he incorrectly summarizes the plot of Joyce’s book. Irwin suggests that Stephen was “groggy from sleep and dreaming” during the “Proteus” chapter, even though Stephen had been awake for some time when this chapter occurs, and may have been day-dreaming, and recalling a dream, but definitely never sleeps during the entire chapter. Irwin also incorrectly mentions “Stephen’s current

sleeping state”³²⁹ at the end of “Ithaca,” a chapter that ends with Bloom sleeping (Stephen had long departed by the end of the chapter), and Bloom, not Stephen, having travelled among the list of Sinbad rhyming names and a mention of Sinbad and the roc’s egg. Irwin’s book further obscures, not clarifies, Joyce’s intertextual manipulation of the *Nights*, by giving Joyce only a general and misunderstood treatment. In his essay “The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce,”³³⁰ Robert Hampson also suggestively links Joyce with Burton before a short passage on Joyce’s use of pantomimes as a *Nights* source influence, showing that, despite the evidence that Joyce acquired Burton after *Ulysses*, and that Joyce likely did not read the *Nights* before finishing *Ulysses*, there is some incorrect insistence that Burton’s text still had a direct textual influence on Joyce before *FW*.

In “Ithaca,” one of the final chapters in *Ulysses*, and one structured in the form of a Christian catechism – a series of questions about what is transpiring between Bloom and Stephen at Bloom’s house, and their answers – is a mention of a very specific seeming pantomime. Bloom seems to have been, in the past, hired to write a song for *Sindbad* but a series of circumstances prevented him from doing so. It was to be “a topical song (music by R.G. Johnston) on the events of the past, or fixtures for the actual, years, entitled *If Brian Boru could but come back and see old Dublin now*, commissioned by Michael Gunn, lessee of the Gaiety Theatre, 46, 47, 48, 49 South King street, and to be introduced into the sixth scene, the valley of diamonds, of the second edition (30 January 1893) of the grand annual Christmas pantomime *Sindbad the Sailor*” (*U* 17.417-23). In this mention Joyce encapsulates much of what will be outlined in this chapter and much of what has been discussed in this dissertation. First, by isolating the variant of the

Nights Joyce references – a pantomime, an English-borne popular culture stage musical being presented in Dublin, one can sense a level of critique that Joyce is giving here. Bloom, an Irishman, is to write a song based on a celebrated Irish king, Brian Boru, in English owned Dublin, in an English based format, itself based on satirical representations of race. It is a song that, given its title, has a sense that Brian Boru would find something wrong with the Dublin of *Ulysses*. That Bloom is linked to this potentially politically charged song with a *Nights*-based pantomime is important here. Joyce critiques the representations of the “East” found in the pantomimes, and in the generalized sense of the *Nights* as he sees it, as being clear misrepresentations of the racially other by a colonially situated English power structure at work within the complex form of the satirical pantomime. By having Bloom associate himself against English portrayals of the Orient in its pantomimes, and yet potentially as the generator from within of the product of the English pantomime, Joyce seems to highlight, here, what Vincent Cheng suggests:

Joyce repeatedly reverses the racialized and derogatory analogies of the Irish as racial others by re-presenting them as enabling bonds of shared ethnicity, re-functioning and activating them to suggest a solidarity and positivity in the racialized analogies – suggesting an implied equation of otherness with the self, of Oriental/Jew with West/Greek, thus denying the convenient, constructed essentialisms of binary distinctions based on absolute and inherent difference.³³¹

Bloom is not only Jewish and Western but also Oriental, Irish, Protestant and Catholic³³² and even by proxy English, but ultimately he does not collude with the pantomime. Bloom does not write the song for six revealed reasons in the catechism including the political (“apprehension of opposition from extreme circles on the questions of the respective visits of Their Royal Highnesses the duke and duchess of York (real) and of

His Majesty King Brian Boru (imaginary)” (*U* 17.431-33)) and the seemingly trivial (“distraction resultant from compassion for Nelly Bouverist’s non-intellectual, non-political, non-topical expression of countenance and concupiscence caused by Nelly Bouverist’s revelations of white articles of non-intellectual, non-political, non-topical underclothing while she (Nelly Bouverist) was in the articles”) (*U* 17.436-40). So, within the form of the pantomime, a structure that seems to be amenable to rebellious ideas and contrary opinions, such as the inclusion, in Ireland, of a symbol of nationalism while under colonial rule, operates still a binary system that resists someone like Bloom’s attempts to incorporate dissent into it.

Nelly Bouverist, one of the stars of Joyce’s fictional version of this pantomime, is, perhaps a character made from two real life stage stars as Gifford suggests: “‘Nelly Bouverist’ intertwines two ‘principal girls,’ Kate Neverist and Nellie Bouverie.”³³³ Joyce also has the writer of this pantomime be “Greenleaf Whittier” (*U* 17.425), which is also the name of 19th century US poet John Greenleaf Whittier, a Quaker who was associated most with his political views against slavery, clearly tying anti-racist thinking to the presentation of this fictional pantomime. Apart from these two details of the writer and of Bouverist, the other aspects of the pantomime appear to be “historically accurate”³³⁴ as Gifford suggests. There were, according to *The Irish Playgoer*,³³⁵ several *Nights* related pantomimes performed at the Gaiety around the date of Joyce’s *Sinbad* including *Sinbad the Sailor* in 1892, *Aladdin, or The Scamp and the Lamp* (1899), and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1890), among many other performances of these pantomimes throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. Gifford writes that “The first edition of the pantomime *Sinbad* made its Dublin debut 26 December 1892; the second, 30 January

1893.”³³⁶ What Joyce brings focus to, by changing the writer of the pantomime and by having Bloom potentially insert an Irish nationalistic sounding song, is on racial and cultural identity and its uncertain roles in the British form of the panto. That identity, in this case, was not allowed inside the real space of the real pantomime, a space Joyce ultimately seems to have found problematic.

There are, of course, many other suggestive allusions to the *Nights* throughout *Ulysses*, however they seem to be largely not textually based, but rather based mostly on pantomimes and generally known cultural knowledge of the *Nights*, and are limited mostly to mentions of Sinbad, Aladdin, and Haroun Al Raschid. Kershner suggests that the *Nights* has a very influential relationship with *Ulysses* by pairing Bloom alongside the character of Sinbad who Kershner calls “a perfect Odyssean hero who escapes by stratagems, rather than heroism, and often survives by being overlooked, ignored, or abandoned.”³³⁷ Yet these characteristics are only generally investigated, as are Kershner’s treatments of other *Nights* allusions in *Ulysses*. By examining the *Nights*-related pantomime form and the particular focus Joyce gives it, much more about Joyce’s political views on romantic Orientalism can be more clearly realized.

The pantomime is a well-known type of musical stage production prevalent in the United Kingdom, and worldwide, to this day. In the UK it seems to have begun in the 18th century, but became much more widespread and popular in the 19th century. Many pantomimes are loose interpretations of fairy tales including *Aladdin* but also *Cinderella*, *Mother Goose*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and others. They are performed in particular during the Christmas season and feature satires of local politics and popular culture.³³⁸ The scripts usually change with each performance, and are meant to be

amended, added to and exaggerated each year, with particular attention to current events and culturally relevant elements. Cheryl Herr remarks on the form's need for these local elements: "So important an aspect of pantomime fun was local color that some end-of-the-century pantomime playbills from Ireland cite, along with costumiers and property specialists, writers and set-designers, 'Local topics by...' and 'Localised by,'"³³⁹ going on to give a particular example from the 1892 Gaiety produced *Sindbad*, one of two very clearly alluded-to pantomimes in *Ulysses*, the other being the character taken from *Aladdin* in "Circe." In addition to localized elements, many pantomimes featured politically charged material, sexual innuendo and often cross-dressing performers. Millie Taylor writes that "The ritual and the participation of pantomime involve the audience in seemingly subversive activity," situating her conversation into Bakhtin's carnivalesque³⁴⁰ she goes on to add the limitations of this subversive activity, one "granted by the authorities, thus reinforcing the social containment in the seemingly anarchic."³⁴¹ This contained subversivity and its diffused power, is clearly something Joyce seems to be referencing with his placement of Greenleaf Whittier as writer of *Sinbad* and Bloom's rejected possibly patriotic song. In addition there was an English structure to the pantomime that Joyce seems to feel limits its ability to be subversive, particularly when transplanted to Ireland. The Gaiety, a place where many of Dublin's pantomimes were shown, also relied, in its productions, "on the visits of the various London companies"³⁴² of performers for the most part, meaning an aura, despite the attempts by panto authors to localize them, of a distinctly English identity.

Another key element of many pantomimes is racial and cultural depiction.

Aladdin, in particular, seems to have been resituated for the panto into an exaggerated

portrayal of pseudo-Chinese or East Asian characters like Aladdin's brother "Wishy Washy" (also in some pantos the name of the laundry), or Widow Twankey, the mother of Aladdin usually played by a man, whose name has also been, in previous incarnations, "Ching Mustapha," "Wee-Ping, Chow-Chow and Tan-kin."³⁴³ These portrayals may be intended to be exaggerated and sarcastic, yet people like Joyce found them problematic, and they are still in use contemporaneously. Paul Bowman, a Senior Lecturer at Cardiff University and the Director of the Race, Representation and Cultural Politics Research Group wrote recently about the depictions of race in *Aladdin* in a pantomime he saw in 2011. He writes about two "Chinese" policemen in the panto who "had their own lengthy scene in which they traded rapid-fire 'he a ping pong sing song ching chong' type exchanges in a contrived argument about too many Chins and Wings and Wongs in the Chinese phone book."³⁴⁴ Claire Mabilat calls an 1826 production of *Aladdin* by Sir Henry Rowley Bishop racially problematic as well. "Whilst the 'Oriental' male is *openly* corrupt and false, the woman's deception is implied by her veiled body, reflecting a perceived hidden Other (and negative) inner nature."³⁴⁵ Other related pantomimes sexualized depictions of the Eastern woman, an 1885 production of *Aladdin* by Augustus Harris featured "an East of alluring heroines in a geography fashioned from chorus girls,"³⁴⁶ due to its cast of dancing theater girls. These varieties of *Aladdin*-based pantomimes show very clearly the relationship that culture and racial representation had in English popular culture, and whether it was of a Middle Eastern "Orient" or an East Asian Orient, what the *Nights* seemed to mean, to the pantomime producers, had some basis in a truthful representation of Eastern culture. This is evidence of the insistence of the *Nights* as being a representative of Orientalism first and foremost. In *Ulysses* Joyce

seems to find this insistence problematic and yet pervasive. His characters interact with *Nights*-esque portrayals of a romanticized East and yet quickly attempt to do away with these romanticisms as falsely applied elements of a popular culture not rooted in reality. What Joyce does in *Ulysses*, using general notions of the *Nights*, and the Orient, is to satirize the satire, to implicate the seemingly subversive pantomime in a very clear mechanism of colonial based binaries. Kershner remarks that “*Ulysses* is virtually a compendium of Orientalist clichés, and to that extent it is complicit with the tradition,”³⁴⁷ however as this chapter outlines, this is a statement oversimplifying the elements of Orientalism in the novel. Joyce definitively situates his work against the tradition of Orientalist cliché, rejecting it for a clearer, sometimes more starkly portrayed yet truer, representation, and in the meantime accepting somewhat the ability of the Oriental elements in popular culture to actually exist, recalling Cheng’s multilayered Joycean “social discourses within the various levels of both hegemony and resistance.”³⁴⁸

During Stephen’s interior examination of reality and meaning in “Proteus,” for example, the young man watches a couple walking on the beach hunting for clams. The “red Egyptians” (*U* 3.370), walking with their dog, provoke Stephen to reflect on dreams, and on sexuality. Stephen contends with the nature of Oriental romanticism versus the truth of what he visually sees, much like Bloom does throughout the book. Watching the couple, Stephen is brought to thinking about his prescient dream, which seems to foreshadow the “Circe” chapter and its brothel setting: “Street of harlots. Remember. Haroun al Raschid” (*U* 3.366), the romantic frame of his seeming daydream, initiated by the sight of the gypsy or “Egyptian” couple, is entrenched at once into the romance of the *Nights*, and its relationship, by foreshadowing “Circe,” with sexuality and Orientalism.

Stephen's *Nights*-esque romantic musing is dispersed by the stark reality of the couple walking past him, "they trudged, the red Egyptians," the man has "blued feet," and a "dull brick muffler strangling his unshaven neck," Stephen calls them "the ruffian and his strolling mort," the woman is equally unflatteringly seen, "loose sand and shellgrit crusted her bare feet," and Stephen imagines her "When night hides her body's flaws" (*U* 3.370-5), which lead him into ruminations on virginity, sexuality, and the notion of an every-woman earth mother figure, among other topics. Despite the romanticism of some of Stephen's reflections, the stark "reality" of what he sees, critically, interferes and even trumps his desperate-seeming attempts to gloss over things, as they seem to be, or at least contend on the same level with them. This contention between romanticism and reality is a theme running through *Ulysses* that Joyce often uses in conjunction with his references to the *Nights*. Here in "Proteus" Stephen thinks of "Haroun al Raschid" (*U* 3.366), the famous ruler of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad, and frequent figure of the *Nights*, particularly in disguise and roaming in the streets anonymously, occasionally revealing himself to commoners or playing tricks on them. Despite Stephen's insistence or suggestive association that the romanticism of a real life Haroun al Rashid, in the figure of the male "Egyptian," might actually be walking in front of him, Joyce's reality of the poverty of the couple, and the reality of Ireland to Stephen, are what seem more pronounced in this chapter and, in part, throughout *Ulysses*. Like the *Nights*, and their pantomime versions, things are rarely what they seem, and romantic notions of the world are usually undermined by the sometimes more cruel seeming, yet ultimately more important, truths.

The chapter “Circe” is a sort of extended dark pantomime itself, written as a play, which has been given extensive scrutiny for its form, psychology, gender focus, comedy, multiple allusions, and more.³⁴⁹ It takes place in Nighttown, Dublin’s red light district, late at night, and in part within a brothel and partially outside on the streets. Bloom has followed Stephen and his friend Lynch here, in an attempt to make sure they are safe. The chapter features stage directions, singing and dancing, and several hallucinatory transformations of characters, which include variants of Bloom, his dead parents, a singing bar of soap, and even Shakespeare. It is also, like a pantomime, rife with elements from Irish political and popular culture. Herr examines its place in terms of Irish identity and the multiple political voices at work vying for dominance throughout the chapter.³⁵⁰ She writes that the chapter “is the most direct treatment in *Ulysses* of the historical contradictions shaping Irish experience.”³⁵¹ Some of these contradictions are, indubitably, the pantomime’s act of satire itself, typically generated within a distinctly English matrix. It is here in this matrix that Joyce uses the allusions to the pantos of the *Nights*, particularly *Aladdin*, and undermines or contends with their intended satires in Joyce’s very personal political pantomime of his own.

Bloom’s father, early in “Circe,” is portrayed as a stereotypical Jewish miser figure from the pages of fictional anti-Semitic tomes, a “stooped bearded figure,” “garbed in the long caftan of an elder in Zion,” concerned with his son’s financial affairs: “I told you not go with drunken goy ever. So you catch no money” (*U* 15.250-4). Bloom’s mother becomes “widow Twankey” (*U* 15.282), mother of Aladdin from the pantomime *Aladdin* usually played by a man in drag and, in the panto version of *Aladdin*, which was set in China, as a highly racialized Chinese woman who runs a laundry. Molly appears

dressed in a romanticized harem outfit. “*A coin gleams on her forehead. On her feet are jeweled toerings. Her ankles are linked by a slender fetterchain. Beside her a camel, hooded with a turreting turban, waits*” (U 15.312-4). Bloom proceeds to watch his wife, in the dark fantasy of “Circe,” engage in sex with another man, Blazes Boylan, suggestively perhaps like Shahriyar watching his wife in the garden. These characters become stand-ins for the anti-romance of this sort of sexuality. The accoutrements of the woman’s body, throughout the chapter, become false lures, and yet they seem to lead to a more realistic, seemingly less romantic, but ultimately, particularly in bed with Molly at the end of the book itself, more fulfilling and “godlike,” realism underneath. And, like the cultural accoutrements of the stereotypes, these “lures” are seen as problematic in Joyce, even if the audience of the pantomime sees them as satires. On the stage of the pantomime in the 19th century is a satire, but it’s usually an Englishman playing a woman (not a woman), an Englishman or woman playing an Arab or Chinese person (not an Arab or Chinese person) – in the “reality” of the novel, it’s the person who is a person (Bloom as the “Jew,” Molly as the Gibraltarian of Spanish and Middle Eastern descent) that problematizes the satire. While the audience knows the “truth” of the person on stage, the real person in life on the street observing one another does not know the truth of the other, in the same way, and so uses definitions from pantomime and other popular representations, to order their world. Joyce points out, often, the inherent problems, and falsity, yet inescapability of doing so.

Perhaps the most striking example of Joyce’s uses of the pantomime and traditional English cultural stereotypes involving the *Nights* comes in “Eumaeus.” The setting of the chapter takes place immediately following “Circe.” Bloom has rescued

Stephen from the perils of Nighttown and helps the younger man walk as they look for somewhere to eat. A late night eatery and coffee shop known as the “cabman’s shelter” provides the two with a temporary table amidst a group of men talking and drinking coffee. Bloom and Stephen briefly sit and chat with the men, but the poor quality of the coffee and food lead Bloom to suggest that they go to his nearby house instead. Here the reader is forced to find a source of stability in its ever-shifting, unstable narrative, and does so in Bloom and his reflections on what is taking place inside. The chapter is perhaps one of the strongest examples of Bloom’s authority and stability, especially because it is a chapter that deliberately obfuscates “reality” in such a way that no character’s identity, including, in part, Bloom’s, is ever fully free from doubt. It is Bloom, however, who, through his concern for Stephen, manages to evade this doubt even while under threat of his own identity’s dissolution.

“Eumaeus” begins with the act of Bloom cleaning off Stephen and taking him to the cabman’s shelter for safety. “Mr Bloom brushed of the greater bulk of the shavings...and bucked him up generally in orthodox Samaritan fashion” (*U* 16.1-3). It is a small and yet telling line about the stability which Bloom persists in bringing to the instability of the novel, and is a foreshadowing of Bloom later re-stabilizing his own bed by brushing off the remnants of potted meat, evidence, perhaps, of an afternoon affair his wife had conducted. Bloom calmly brushes aside the potential fractured broken reality and persists in his own stable notion of the future. Bloom’s steadiness and vision of the future restoration of both himself, his household and Stephen, is reflected throughout the chapter. “Mr Bloom who at all events was in complete possession of his faculties, never more so, in fact disgustingly sober” (*U* 16.61-2) cautions Stephen against their recent past

and the dangers inherent in the red-light district they perilously had found themselves in. It is in this solidity that the novel seems to function most effectively. Bloom never succumbs to the narrator's constant play on his name or character and instead, despite the ever-constant threat of dissolution, maintains his core identity and insists on that stability for the narrative's progression. This set up of Bloom as this type of character here presents an opportunity to juxtapose himself against the sailor Murphy and his constantly shifting, and ultimately false, personal representations.

Murphy, a sailor in "Eumaeus," who declares that "*The Arabian Nights Entertainment* was my favourite" (*U* 16.1680) book and who is also likened to Sinbad, is also evidence of how Joyce uses the *Nights* in an unstable manner akin to his suspicion of satirical representations in pantomime versions of the *Nights* in *Ulysses*. He sits in the shelter espousing racial and cultural truths he learned from his travels, akin to a pantomime, or, perhaps a Richard Burton: "I seen maneaters in Peru that eats corpses and the livers of horses" (*U* 16.470-1), and "Cooks rats in your soup, he appetisingly added, the chinks does" (*U* 16.772) when referring to a Chinese man he claims to have known, and suggests Italians are killers adept with knives, and "That was why they thought the park murders of the invincibles was done by foreigners on account of them using knives" (*U* 16.590-2). The sailor's tall tales of adventuring travel and romantic self identity are downplayed by Bloom and the narrator of the chapter who both disbelieve Murphy and devolve the sailor into ironic variants of himself such as "skipper Murphy" (*U* 16.726), "friend Sinbad and his horrifying adventures" (*U* 16.858), "Shipahoy" (*U* 16.901), and "the old stager" (*U* 16.930), all of which paint an ultimate picture of the *Nights*, the Orient, and the sailor, as being false and ironic dreams of an unattainable

fantasy, one rooted very specifically in a false representation of the East, or of any sort of stereotype of any sort via specifically the *Nights'* pantomimes. The desperation of the sailor's need to regale the men in the shelter with his adventure stories, and of the proprietor's nationalistic voice to air his political views, are two important sections where the narrative threatens to dissolve into separate strands of thought, each viable potential realities. Bloom's thoughts on the conversation, instead, gel them together under his own steady, more truthful, vision of the disparate strands of reality at work in the shelter.

At the beginning of the chapter the sailor asks Stephen if he had ever heard of Simon Dedalus, Stephen's father, to which Stephen gives a noncommittal answer. The sailor then launches into an obviously false story about Stephen's father performing at a circus shooting eggs balanced on bottles with a gun, backwards over his shoulder. Bloom is the voice of stability in this tall tale, even in his acceptance of the fiction to keep the social air of the shelter coherent. "A silence ensued till Mr Bloom for agreeableness' sake just felt like asking him whether it was for a marksmanship competition" (*U* 16.6-7) to which the sailor replies that Simon Dedalus "toured the wide world with Hengler's Royal Circus. I seen him do that in Stockholm" (*U* 16.12-3). Bloom, knowing full well that Simon Dedalus was never in a circus and knowing that the man is Stephen's father, replies "Curious coincidence" (*U* 16.14), deflating the sailor's reality for Stephen and himself, and the reader, while at the same time maintaining the amiable atmosphere of the late night shelter. It is only to Stephen, to whom Bloom has safety in mind, that Bloom confides about the sailor's stories: "He could spin those yarns for hours on end all night long and lie like old boots" (*U* 16.23). Bloom, while accepting the notion of the sailor's reality for geniality's sake, still insists on a more truthful interior authenticity, one where

the sailor, even in his right to individuality, is not supposed to venture, into the lies and tall tales of fiction to misrepresent reality. It is in this notion that beyond the relativity of individuality, and beyond the disparate strands of reality that make up human social groups, there exists a more firm version of certainty for Bloom. Bloom doesn't even care if the stories hold any semblance of truth, and at many points the conversation in the shelter causes Bloom to reflect on his own life, and own wishes for travel and education. The point of the situation for Bloom, though, is not to engage in a play of different voices but rather gather both himself and Stephen together in a collective identity (which in the next chapter is even pushed further when the two merge in the narrative, in a possible parallel universe, to become "Stoom" (*U* 17.549) and "Blephen" (*U* 17.551). In this collective identity under the authority of Bloom, the fractured voices of the shelter, and of the book, congeal to form one overarching stable vision against the inability of the pantomime to represent much at all.

Language operates in the "Eumaeus" chapter as an indicator not only of the late time of day, but also of the greater theme of the sense, in the vast diversity of labels used in the chapter, of uncertain identity. The specific ways in which the coffee that is served to Bloom and Stephen is described, point to a degeneration of language to the point where words can't even come close to describing the thing that they are supposed to. The first description is of a "swimming cup of a choice concoction labelled coffee" (*U* 16.355), which devolves later into an "offending beverage" (*U* 16.810), an "untastable apology for a cup of coffee" (*U* 16.1141), "whatever you like to call it" (*U* 16.1170), to finally "that stuff" (*U* 16.1646). The coffee is never clearly itself, only an unstable representation of a word, an agreed upon word which represents an agreed upon physical

reality but it is a word, due in part to the uncertain substance of the “stuff” in the mug, that can never and will never be able to be applied to the thing itself.

The stuff is the certainty of the instability of language and its uncertain application to identity that further plays out in the names of the characters in the shelter. Like the coffee, Bloom goes through a series of transformations using language, but unlike the coffee he emerges at the end of the chapter, complete and assuredly himself. The “disgustingly sober” (*U* 16.62) Bloom starts as “Mr Bloom,” (*U* 16.1) and maintains a strong semblance of that labeled identity throughout most of the chapter, digressing slightly into “Mr B.” (*U* 16.594), “Bloom (properly so dubbed)” (*U* 16.1307), “B” (*U* 16.1495), to “the neverfailing Bloom” (*U* 16.1711). Despite reading a misprint of his name as a participant in Dignam’s funeral as “Boom” (*U* 16.1260) in a newspaper left in the shelter, the narrator corrects it: “L. Boom (as it incorrectly stated)” (*U* 16.1262), providing, via Bloom, a rare restabilization in a chapter devoted to shifting labels and uncertain definitions that never occurs for anything else so clearly. Bloom’s identity, though slightly modified via his name, is never in doubt in the chapter. Unlike the sailor, who becomes the stand-in for a pantomime character taken from the *Nights*, Bloom resists the sleepy degradation of the evening taking place in the chapter. Despite this, Alistair Stead writes “the character who was so intimately rendered in the funeral scene, must still be felt, on one level at least, as a mis-representation.”³⁵² And yet Bloom is the only character of stability throughout the chapter, and the reader, like Stephen, must rely on him - “Lean on me” (*U* 16.1720) he says - in order to form a semblance of a realistic narrative, particularly against the incredible linguistic shifting that takes place there. Bloom still exists in the chapter and insists on his existence and all of its slight

misrepresentations throughout the novel, creating an undercurrent of constancy that anchors the narrative in distinct ways.

The ambiguity of language and its ability to mislabel things is never truly tested with Bloom because it is clear throughout that that is who he is. Contrast Bloom's name with the labels applied to the sailor, who, again, "scarcely seemed to be a Dublin resident" (*U* 16.441), becomes a "jarvey, if such he was" (*U* 16.709), is made fun of by the narrator as "friend Sinbad and his horrifying adventures" (*U* 16.858), and renamed "Shipahoy" (*U* 16.901), and becomes, like the fabled proprietor of the shelter (rumored to be "skin-the-goat," a getaway driver in the notorious Phoenix Park Murders), completely unreliable to the point that almost nothing is to be trusted, in the chapter, by what it is called. Nothing except of course Bloom, whose voice and character maintain the necessary permanence throughout the novel to move the narrative forward, and whose presence acts as a stabilizing force with its clarity of vision and perseverance of purpose. Bloom remains an anachronism, and yet he is the one guiding principle who provides stability throughout the novel.

The *Nights* functions in "Eumaeus," and throughout the novel, as a satirical undermining of traditionally English cultural misrepresentations, largely pointing to the pantomime and its inability to escape their own misrepresentations, even within a satirical context. Murphy the sailor, fan of the *Nights*, and its fantasies, likened to Sinbad - the hapless merchant and accidental adventurer - is no more than a stereotype of a fantastic liar, passing off postcards from others as evidence of his trips, and essentially becoming, like so many of the English and European translations of the *Nights* - things the pantomimes were based on, a fraudulent representative of worldly knowledge. The

Nights-based stereotypes of Bloom's family in "Circe" are dark images of Bloom's inner psychology, outer misrepresentatives that are entirely false and yet plague Bloom throughout his life, as potential character eroding elements inherent in his own sense of self. Likewise Stephen's reflections on the "Egyptian" cockle pickers on the beach function as evidence of his own awareness of the falsity of his dream, and of his own heightened sense of the faulty romanticism of so much language.

While Joyce's rewriting of the *Nights* in an abstract sense is certainly at work in *Ulysses*, it is only through a general cultural awareness of some of the major elements from the *Nights*, such as Sinbad's journeys or the general Orientalistic background that the *Nights* are an integral part of. Bloom falls asleep, and both him, and we the reader, reflect on Bloom's ability to travel through the *Nights*-esque landscape of Dublin, which exists couched in the pantomime in the "Ithaca" chapter alongside such panto figures (and their exaggerated future Joycean counterparts perhaps) as:

Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailer and Whinbad the Whaler and Ninbad the Nailer and Finbad the Failer and Binbad the Bailer and Pinbad the Pailer and Minbad the Mailer and Hinbad the Hailer and Rinbad the Railer and Dinbad the Kailer and Vinbad the Quailer and Linbad the Yailer and Xinbad the Phthailer.

When?

Going to dark bed there was a square round Sinbad the Sailor roc's auk's egg in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler. (*U* 17.2322-3)³⁵³

When Joyce uses specifics from the *Nights* in *Ulysses* it is via the pantomimes, and not any clear textual version, and the essential elements of the pantomime including satire and irony and race. It might seem, given this reading, that Joyce is being dismissive of the satires and their representations at work in popular culture, and in part he does seem

to favor the gritty reality over the romantic representation. However, his incorporation of these elements, and his insistence on their actual existences in the lives of his characters and throughout the culture of *Ulysses*, means that Joyce is not dismissing or rewriting like those political critics in Chapter Four, but rather he does outline the problematic yet very real existence of such strands of thought, obtaining the complexity Said sought after and yet something his necessarily binary application could never escape.

By isolating which version of the *Nights Ulysses* interacts with, this nuanced understanding of intertextuality seems to have been clarified. Where, in these representations, can Scheherazade and her G-manuscript morality be found? Perhaps more needs to be investigated into the particulars of the pantomimes and their relationship to the *Nights*, but suggestively her morality can certainly be seen in the numerous allusions to sexuality in the pantos, and to their relationship to an exoticized East situated in the Orientalist framework that so much of Europe demanded the *Nights* to exist in, in the 19th century. Perhaps it is also importantly at work in these cultural and racial depictions of the Orient that are problematically enmeshed since the 19th century. The nuanced use of these elements in Joyce, however, becomes clearer in its complexities, when examined through the specific lens of *Nights*-based pantomimes, rather than just generally applying *The 1001 Nights* to Joyce as many studies have done. Scheherazade's delightful undermining of the falsity of a world insisting on some kind of strict and yet unnatural system of behavior is certainly at work in Joyce's complicated manipulation of the *Nights* pantomime against itself.

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- ³¹² Cheng, *Joyce, race, and empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9.
- ³¹³ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 19.
- ³¹⁴ Yared, "Joyce's Sources: Sir Richard F. Burton's *Terminal Essay* in *Finnegans Wake*," *Joyce Studies Annual 2000*, ed. Thomas F. Staley, (Austin: U of Texas P, 2000), 125.
- ³¹⁵ Don Gifford, with Robert J. Seidman, *Ulysses Annotated: Notes for James Joyce's Ulysses*, (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), 559.
- ³¹⁶ Thornton, *Allusions in Ulysses*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 456.
- ³¹⁷ Herr, *Joyce's Anatomy of Culture*, (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1986).
- ³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 164.
- ³¹⁹ Power, "Shahrazade's wake: The 'Arabian Nights' and the narrative dynamics of Charles Dickens and James Joyce," PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1988, 19.
- ³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.
- ³²¹ *James Joyce Quarterly*. "ReOrienting Joyce." 35.2, 35.3 (1998).
- ³²² *Ibid.*, Kershner, "Ulysses and the Orient," 277.
- ³²³ *Ibid.*, Bowen, "All in a Night's Entertainment: The Codology of Haroun al Raschid, the *Thousand and One Nights*, Bloomusalem/Baghdad, the Uncreated Conscience of the Irish Race, and Joycean Self-Reflexivity," 300.
- ³²⁴ *Ibid.*, Shloss, "'Behind the Veil': James Joyce and the Colonial Harem," 334.
- ³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 341.
- ³²⁶ *Ibid.*, King, "Hermeneutics of Suspicion: Nativism, Nationalism, and the Language Question in 'Oxen of the Sun,'" 352.
- ³²⁷ *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia: Volume 2*. (see n. 6), 612.
- ³²⁸ See n. 9.
- ³²⁹ Both quotes from Irwin, (see n. 5), 279.
- ³³⁰ Hampson, Robert G. "The Genie out of the Bottle: Conrad, Wells and Joyce." *The Arabian Nights in English Literature*, ed. Peter Caracciolo, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 218-43.
- ³³¹ Cheng (see n. 1), 290.
- ³³² In the "Ithaca" chapter Bloom's baptismal history is provided, he appears to have been baptized three times: Once at "the protestant church of Saint Nicholas Without" (*U* 17.542), once at the (Roman Catholic) "church of the Three Patrons, Rathgar" (*U* 17.546) and once at the "village of Swords" (*U* 17.545), under a pump. The village of Swords is known for its natural waters.
- ³³³ Gifford, *Ulysses Annotated*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 575.
- ³³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³³⁵ *The Irish playgoer and amusement record...*, Volume 1, (Dublin: Irish Associated Press, 1899), 16-17.
- ³³⁶ Gifford (see n. 19).
- ³³⁷ R. Brandon Kershner, *The Culture of Joyce's Ulysses*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 183.

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- ³³⁸ See, for example, R.J. Broadbent, *A History of Pantomime*, (London, 1901) and/or Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *Pantomime: a Story in Pictures*, (New York: Taplinger, 1973).
- ³³⁹ Herr (see n. 6), 110.
- ³⁴⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, translated by Helene Iswolsky, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).
- ³⁴¹ Millie Taylor, *British Pantomime Performance*, (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007), 18.
- ³⁴² Joseph V. O'Brien, *Dirty Dublin: A City in Distress, 1899-1916*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 45.
- ³⁴³ "The origin of popular pantomime stories," Victoria and Albert Museum, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/pantomime-origins/>.
- ³⁴⁴ Bowman, "Question about Festive Pantomime Racism," *Jacques Ranciere*, December 30, 2011, <http://ranciere.blogspot.com/2011/12/question-about-festive-pantomime-racism.html>
- ³⁴⁵ Mabilat, *Orientalism and Representations of Music in the Nineteenth-Century British Popular Arts*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), 54.
- ³⁴⁶ Edward Ziter, *The Orient on the Victorian Stage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 194.
- ³⁴⁷ Kershner (see n. 6), 292.
- ³⁴⁸ Cheng (see n. 1).
- ³⁴⁹ See *Reading Joyce's "Circe"*, Andrew Gobson, editor, (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1994), for an extensive bibliography on the chapter.
- ³⁵⁰ See in particular Herr, 166-180.
- ³⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 167.
- ³⁵² Stead, "Reflections on Eumaeus: Ways of Error and Glory in 'Ulysses,'" *James Joyce and Modern Literature*, ed. W.J. McCormack and Alistair Stead, (London: Routledge, 1982), 147.
- ³⁵³ Sinbad, Tinbad and Whinbad in particular feature on the cast of *The Grand Christmas Pantomime, Sinbad the Sailor's* 1892 program featured in Herr, p. 122.

Conclusion

I have focused on a wide range of types of texts from vastly different time periods and art forms, and have done so deliberately in an attempt to more closely define what kind of text the *Nights* is, and how more idiosyncratic scholarly approaches to the *Nights* can be effective ways of clarifying this text. I hope that the revelatory research and close narrative readings of these many disparate texts have shown a possible answer to the problem of defining the *Nights*. In many ways the *Nights* in its oldest G-manuscript form is still the best version of the story collection – it is very funny, easy to read, and does not turn away from the sexuality that was its genesis, in the frame tale, to begin with. My research allows the possibility of further studies based on this notion of the *Nights* that I look forward to reading and encouraging for years to come. My dissertation by itself is not necessarily “the” answer to one clear “urtextual” version of the *Nights*, dismissing all other variants – “Aladdin” himself demands to be a part of the system of the *Nights*, even without his clear moral connection to Scheherazade, for example. And yet, within my research I argue that “Aladdin” must be related in some measureable way to Scheherazade’s morality – whether it is how Galland, the first author of “Aladdin” treated the frame story into which his orphan tale was inserted, or how within any characterization of the story, such as that of Disney’s, can still be detected some trace of Scheherazadian morality.

This relationship of the parts of the sum of the *Nights* brings up important issues that my dissertation alludes to but does not clearly address. It may not be readily provable

by any means but it is certainly suggestive that sexuality is such an integral part of European Orientalist depictions - particularly those of the 18th and 19th century Orientalist painters from France and England - of the Middle Eastern region, and this sexuality may have some roots in the G-manuscript's identity. The *Nights* and Scheherazade may have some unconscious remnants in Orientalist depictions of the Middle East as being a region of sensuality. It leads to a secondary, but related project I have initiated alongside this dissertation – an examination of the roots of Orientalism in early 20th century US and English popular culture and its definitive relationship with past European colonial depictions of that region. The relationship between how the sexuality of the G-manuscript “infiltrated” European Orientalist thought about the Middle East seems possible on some level. But, as I've shown in the dissertation itself, it is not my intent to demand a G-manuscript based identity of every single variant of the *Nights*, but rather to show where or how these variants may have begun to formulate their own identificatory markers, and perhaps to free the *Nights* from its generalized, static and certain identity.

These markers seem to find clarification in semiotics. Much remains, in fact, to be done with Genette's other very useful terms and how they also can illuminate areas of a text like the *Nights* in revelatory ways. Within his notion of transtextuality, Genette lists the sub-variants of intertextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, metatextuality and hypotextuality – all engaging ways to consider when approaching a fluid and amorphous conglomerative text such as the *Nights*. Genette's redefined intertextuality stresses clarity, for example, in explaining what specific elements are at work in a text – Payne's *Nights* inside Burton's *Nights*, for example. Architextuality is related to how a text fits into a genre or group of texts - an integral theme of this dissertation as a whole.

Metatextuality is “explicit or implicit critical commentary of one text on another text”³⁵⁴ such as Burton’s insistence on being “not-Lane.” Hypotextuality is what the *Nights* essentially has been involved with throughout history – the level of engagement in one of its variants with a previous, related one. Clearly a text like the *Nights* can use clarification, and these terms seem to do just that by being able to place a more specific understanding of a text into focus.

In addition, by critiquing the foundational texts and early philosophies of postcolonial studies, and their manipulation of the *Nights* to such an extent that the text itself seems to disappear, I believe I have also inserted my study into the contemporary call for a nuanced yet political understanding of the potentials of postcolonial theoretical applications in a literary setting - ones which do not dismiss but instead reveal. While *Culture and Imperialism* is certainly Said’s call for a more complex approach to political theory, I think I have shown, in the careful repositioning of the *Nights* away from Orientalists like Burton, that the application of these political theories still has a way to go to before the word or its usefulness has some palpable, beneficial applicability to the study of literature. In her 2010 book *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies*³⁵⁵ Lisa Lampert-Weissig has shown that the flexibility of the notion of postcolonial theory can be accommodated to temporally dispersed texts. Her recent study is part of a trend toward a less essentialistic application of theory that my dissertation also attempts to connect with. In fact the term postcolonial seems to be insufficient itself to be able to contain the great amount of breadth of its various applications, and seems more to be related to cultural representations and their problematic power structures, and I believe a

more clarified, perhaps even redefined term and approach to be on its way in academic circles.

At the same time it is important to mention that my intent is neither laudatory or dismissive of the many variants of the *Nights* and their problems. Burton writes many things that would seem unthinkable today, although I suspect his intent was not entirely serious, given the sense of humor he injects throughout his *Nights*. Regardless, a celebration of this humor is not the intention of this study. In humor, in its acceptances and dismissals, one sees traces of truths about history that should not go unexamined, however, and much remains to be done with the study of humor's inherent relationship with the *Nights*. Burton was a complex figure and he rarely liked to write or speak in an earnest manner, even - or especially - in his most academic writing. It is in his seemingly conflicting tendencies to rebel against the establishment and yet at the same time seek its acceptance that Burton is inherently much more interesting than other writers from similar backgrounds or time periods. The earnest tone of Edward William Lane's *Nights* and his many anthropological essays were a source of derision to Burton, and Burton's antagonistic approach to Lane actually reveals something interesting and problematic about Lane. Lane, Burton felt, attempted to romanticize Egypt and Islam to English readers, and to showcase an erudition regarding the East - and this Burton found lacking and problematic. He critiques Lane not necessarily for passing along information, but for passing along information as a figure of authority, as a colonial figure looking down on his colony. In his own way Burton is actually giving Lane more of a postcolonial reading than even Said does - he is saying that Lane owns nothing of what he seems to because Lane is neither Muslim, of Arab background nor a member of the colonized populace.

While Burton's response is to rewrite, in some way, a similar - yet exaggerated and sarcastic - viewpoint, I think Burton delightfully and antagonistically resituates Orientalist discourse against itself. He presents his findings in all seriousness as Lane, as other 19th century anthropologists did as well, and in a similar fashion with a similar methodology and authority. And yet his findings (the Sotadic Zone for example) are so deliberately combative, deliberately rebellious against the insulated establishment of the burgeoning European anthropological industry, that they cannot truly be read as examples of strict colonial binarism, because they were and are not. This to me seems like a more nuanced approach to postcolonialism and Orientalism than simply dismissing Burton for being racist or some other simplistic reason - and it sheds significant light on the complexities at work in the English Empire during its moment of decline in the late 19th century.

I want my project to be a part of a call to initiate a truly more complex interaction within postcolonial theory - although that title has incredibly flexible and uncertain borders - and within *Nights* research. There is in fact no other work of literature that is located across so many different cultures and time periods than the *Nights*, and yet it resists being a true part of a world literature and still remains as some kind of Orientalistically bound textual object. This is unfortunate, and really it points to larger questions about "ethnically" bound "world" literatures, theoretical engagements, translation as a practice or object of study, or cultural mores that are forever enmeshed outside of the traditional canon. Much of this dissertation engages with a transnational approach to this piece of literature, an examination of narrative connections between a 14th/15th century Syrian Arabic manuscript, an 18th century French publication, an 18th

century English pirated copy/translation of that French publication, two very distinct 19th century English versions: one, a moralizing text containing alleged truths about a foreign culture, the other, an “ammoralizing” text containing further alleged truths about foreign cultures, 20th century film versions including a Hollywood blockbuster adventure film, an English romantic adventure film, a Disney G-rated animated cartoon and an X-rated Italian film, and a 20th century novel generally seen as the best work of literature in the English language which intertextually interweaves elements of and indeed rewrites the *Nights* throughout its narrative. Truly, a grandiose-sounding undertaking that certainly leaves many details understudied. However, the point of this dissertation is to showcase just how an international/transnational text of this magnitude could be approached finally, and finally from a point that extracts it from its uneasy Orientalist clothing, which it has been cloaked in ever since the 19th century.

The Internet is a space that is perfect for beginning to think about or study a work on such a transnational level as the *Nights* and the potential for future *Nights* related studies. In 2008 I began a blog-based website that I called *The Journal of the 1001 Nights*, intending, in large part, to use it as a place to store interesting facts or websites that I stumbled across during my research, but things I wasn't directly involved in using at the time. Quickly it became a sort of meeting point on the Internet for *Nights*-related scholars around the world, and I realized how important the digital humanities age has become in academia. Due to the blog I have given interviews, aided professors, students, researchers, authors and others, many of whom have in turn aided me with information and upcoming *Nights* related events. According to Alex Reid,³⁵⁶ some 93% of academic articles are not cited in other research, a staggering figure, and yet it is precisely these

articles – largely at academic presses – that are required for people to get tenure, continue in their careers, or even get an interview or job as an on-the-market PhD Candidate or recent graduate. My blog has been cited in an academic (peer-reviewed) article in the journal *Folklore*,³⁵⁷ has been catalogued on the UCSD Library's website of trusted online academic resources,³⁵⁸ listed as a source for numerous courses' websites and syllabi at a variety of levels, led to my interview on the *Nights* by Colombian National Radio, and also consultations for *The Arabian Nights in Wisconsin 2010-2011* (a statewide reading initiative sponsored by the Center for the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin – Madison), a PBS based television show on the *Nights* called *Invitation to World Literature: The Thousand and One Nights*, and led to me helping to proofread and edit Paul Nurse's history of the *Nights: Eastern Dreams: How the Arabian Nights Came to the World* (Viking Canada 2010). All of these things would never had been possible without my website and its availability online, let alone being contacted because of the blog by a vast number of esteemed *Nights* scholars, or by the many college students working on papers, or the number of graduate students from the States to Iran, studying and researching the *Nights*. The number of freely available copies of the many different variants of the *Nights* available online has increased dramatically thanks to people like JC Byers, who runs the website wollamshram.ca which features complete copies of Burton's, Lane's and many other versions of the *Nights*. Google books has copies freely available of several of the Arabic manuscripts of the *Nights*, and archive.org contains multiple copies of the variety of versions of the *Nights* published throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Many journals and academics are posting their *Nights* related and other research online, freely available, and the number of encouraging and welcoming and

rapid responses I've received to email inquires of writers and professors makes the Internet a vital worldwide university. The digital age is particularly *Nights*-esque and hypertextuality will be an additional semiotic term that will doubtlessly find a wealth of possibilities online with the *Nights*.

I think the future of *Nights* studies is particularly exciting, much work remains to be done on the *Nights* and its many variants, and much remains to be done in bringing the *Nights*, and the Middle East, into a truly international conversation rather than one limited to the discourse of the other. I think this dissertation illuminates some of these many politically charged issues and some of the potential applications for future studies, not only of the *Nights* but also of any literary text, particularly those given a culturally distinct identity by others. *The 1001 Nights* reveals that text is alive. Scheherazade has, and undoubtedly will be a worthy opponent to anyone approaching her for all time as she continues to spin her infinities within the abstractly bound constructs of her book covers.

³⁵⁴ Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 206.

³⁵⁵ Lampert-Weissig, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

³⁵⁶ Reid, "on the value of academic blogging," *digital digs: alex-reid.net*, March 5, 2011, <http://www.alex-reid.net/2011/03/on-the-value-of-academic-blogging.html>

³⁵⁷ "Noble Betrayers of their Faith, Families and Folk: Some Non-Muslim Women in Mediaeval Arabic Popular Literature," by Niall Christie, *Folklore* Volume 123, Issue 1, 2012, 84-98.

³⁵⁸ See "Comparative Literature" and "Middle East Studies" at <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/info/resources>

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